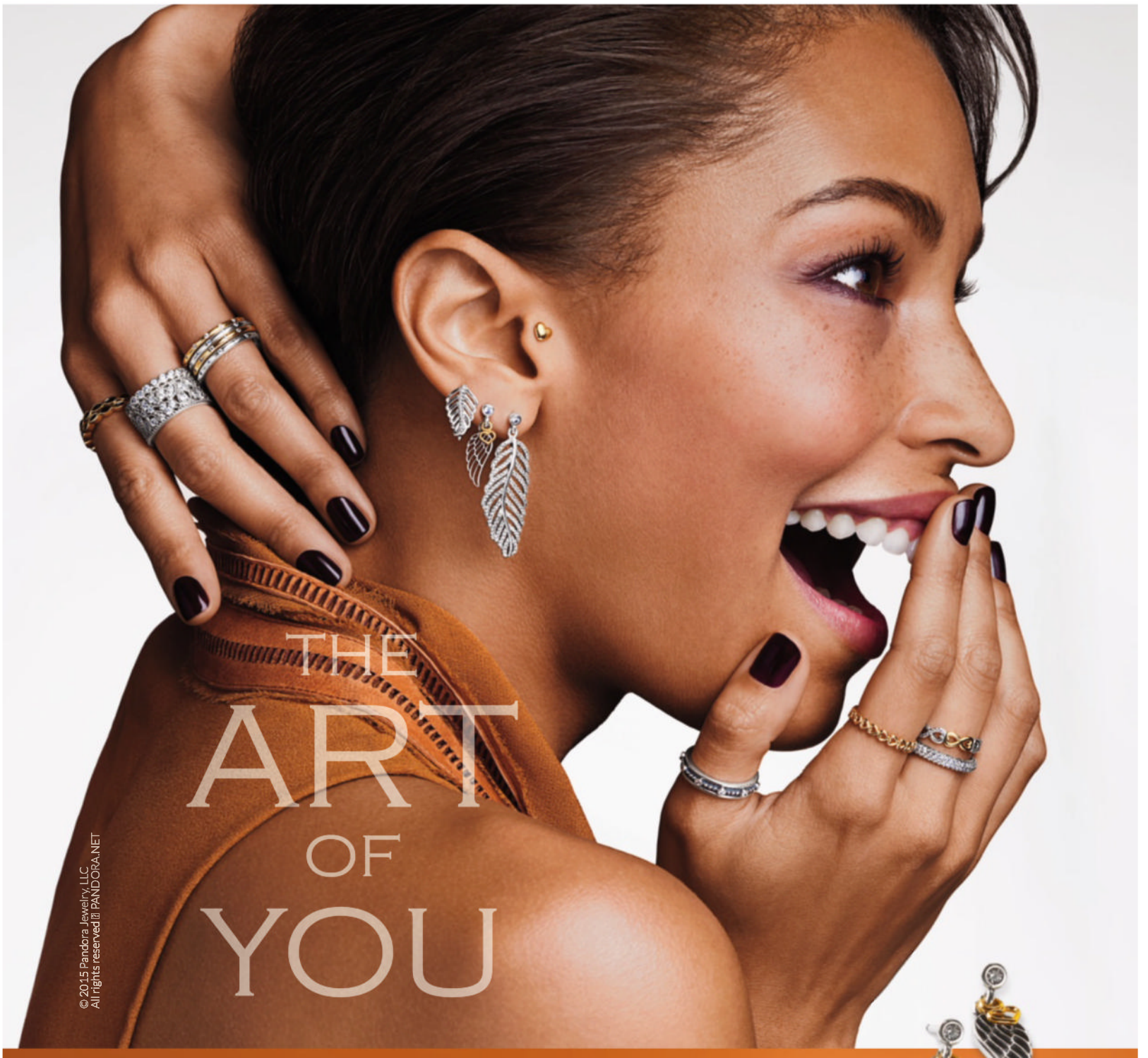
REAL SIMPLE
LIFE MADE EASIER
INSTANT MEAL PLANNING
A month of family dinners
GET DRESSED WITH LESS STRESS
8 SIMPLE RULES TO PULL TOGETHER ANY OUTFIT
the home decorating source book
clutter-busting tips for your messiest room
making friends as a grown-up
SEPTEMBER 2015

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LIFE MADE EASIER

FOOLPROOF RULE NO. 2

**STYLE AROUND YOUR SHOES**

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FOOLPROOF RULE NO. 6

**WEAR JUST ONE COLOR, BUT VARY THE TONES**

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# Thoughts

"That's the real secret to dressing well: It's all about attitude.... It's about walking into a room, knowing that you look and feel good, and projecting that attitude out to everyone who sees you."

BETTY HALBREICH,
*SECRETS OF A FASHION THERAPIST*

Photograph by Henry Horenstein

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SHISEIDO

# the Simple List

YOUR MONTHLY DOSE OF USEFUL TIDBITS, TIMELY TRIVIA, AND CATCHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

## 55
**YEARS**

How long the character-building benefits of playing high school sports can last, according to a recent report published in *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies.* A team (ha) of researchers looked at two things: if others *expected* former varsity athletes to show more leadership and teamwork skills than nonathletes (the answer: yes) and if the athletes actually did. Examining a pool of 300 sporty subjects (men, mostly in their 80s), the study found that for more than five decades into adulthood, the subjects were more social and confident and scored leadership positions more often than did nonathletes. They also donated more time and money to volunteer work—a good goal indeed.

**FOR MORE FUN FACTS AND FIGURES,** follow us on Twitter (@RealSimple).

## 25%

**The decrease in bullying incidents in U.S. schools in recent years, thanks to school-based prevention programs, reports the organization NoBullying.com. In addition to educational outreach, there are now high-tech anti-bullying tools for parents and kids. The app KnowBullying, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, features conversation starters and warning signs for parents. The StopIt app allows students to report cyberbullying anonymously to school officials or to other adults straight from a smartphone. (The app is currently in use at more than 80 schools nationwide.) But technology still can't match the power of friends banding together. Fifty-seven percent of bullying stops when a peer intervenes.**

## 11

The number of handbags, on average, most American women say they own, according to a survey last year by online consignment shop ThredUp. The study also revealed that women house about 90 pieces of clothing and accessories per closet. And yet respondents said they don't use 20 percent of their wardrobes. Ready to ad*dress* the issue? Consider freeing up some real estate by donating underused clothing. (Check out dressforsuccess.org, goodwill.org, or pickupplease.org, sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans of America.) And before all those empty hangers entice you to go shopping, find out which nine essentials—just nine!—can see you through an entire work week (page 67).

Written by
N. Jamiyla Chisholm

Illustration by
Darling Clementine

## 51 OF 53

**How many 110-year-olds living at the time of a June 2015 Stanford University report were women. (That's 96 percent.) Anecdotally, we know that women tend to outlive men, but this report on gender and longevity seeks to detail why. One key factor, scientists believe, is the health of stem cells (neutral cells that can specialize to replace damaged ones in the body). Estrogen encourages the production of antioxidant genes and helps strengthen stem cells. Testosterone, on the other hand, increases cell oxidation, which causes aging. The answer, of course, isn't that simple—hormones never are—and researchers are still looking for answers. Maybe someday we'll know exactly what makes 110-year-old supercentenarians (yes, that's what they're called) so super.**

## 200

The total number of video games in which the fictional character Mario has appeared, according to Nintendo of America. His most famous job, as the hero who saves Princess Toadstool in Super Mario Bros., began 30 years ago this month, on September 13, 1985. (Punching bricks was profitable. Mario helped move more than 310 million units worldwide.) But he actually debuted four years earlier, as Donkey Kong's opponent—a gig Mario repeated in every update, including Donkey Kong, Jr. There were dozens of eponymous titles, from Mario Tennis to Mario Pinball Land. And the miniature Italian stallion took on a bunch of supporting roles, too. Did you know, for example, that Mario was the referee in Punch-Out!!? A construction worker in Wrecking Crew? And a basketball player in NBA Street V3? He might not always be wearing his signature overalls, but the moustache is hard to miss.

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# RUMORS

MQ1-15

BEHR If you feel it you can find it™

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Exclusively at
THE HOME DEPOT

**OFF THE CUFF**
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20 easy-to-make meals—plus handy shopping lists!—that will simplify *(ahhh)* your weeknight routine ..... 156

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## MORNINGS, UNFILTERED

We asked our followers on @WomenIRL—our Instagram campaign focused on life's real moments—to show us what their busy mornings look like, because we know the hours before school are hectic. We saw filthy floors, some spilled milk, and *a lot* of coffee.

**@JESSICABASSMARTIN**
"Breakfast is coming right up! Muffins, anyone?"

**@ANBO6**
"'My diet starts tomorrow,' I say every day of my life."

**@AJONSSON31**
"In the battle of Mom vs 2-year-old this morning, the 2-year-old proved to be faster and swiped the milk jug before Mom even had a chance."

**@KNAPTIME KNITTER**
"Don't worry, Mom. It's just me, Atticus, in a costume. You don't have to be afraid. I'm not a real Stormtrooper."

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@realsimple

## WE ASKED:

**What's one thing you wish you had learned in school? (More than 1,000 of you answered!)**

***Athena Harvey***
"I wish I had learned more about finances, such as budgeting, credit, retirement. Stuff I needed to know when I was in the real world."

***Melissa Elpers Geittmann***
"I wish I had learned how to use power tools. So many DIY projects I'd love to do!"

***Janet Otto Warner***
"Not how to take a test, but how to seek the knowledge that enriches my life!"

***Melissa Miles***
"How to ask for a raise."

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL ESSENTIALS!

Everything you need for a successful school year is at RealSimple.com.

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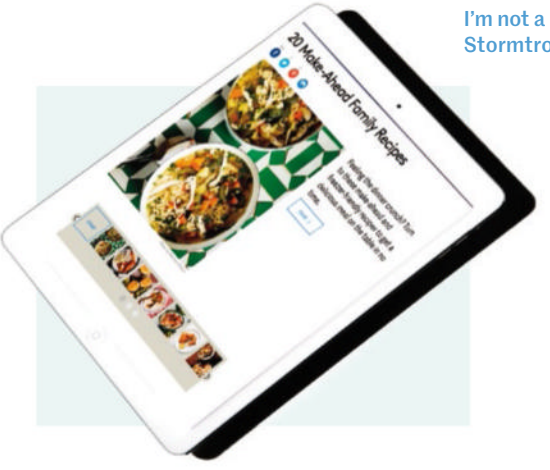
- What nutritionists pack in their kids' lunches
- Plus, the best backpacks, first-day outfits, school supplies, and more!



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# Editor's Note

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**I THINK SOMEBODY IS TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING.**

First I spent a recent evening with my friend Tina, who had just returned from three days of fly-fishing, alone, on the Delaware River. No kids, no husband, and no (OK, *limited*) contact with her office. Tina is a hard-working, organized woman who goes on mission trips to build houses with her church and organizes our town's yearly Thanksgiving food drive, which feeds more than 500 disadvantaged families. In other words, she spends a lot of time taking care of other people. And she decided she needed three days of taking care of no one but herself. (Although she did send a lot of photos home to her husband because, as she explained, "He thinks I'm having an affair." Which made both of us laugh hysterically. As if she had the time!)

Then I read the story "Little House in the Big Woods," on page 148 of this issue. Jenny Carney is, like Tina, a hardworking urbanite. After diagnosing herself with "nature-deficit disorder" (which I am now convinced I have, too), Jenny realized that she needed time away. So, with help from her father, she built a tiny shed in the Wisconsin woods. It has no running water or electricity, but it does have a woodstove for cooking and heat. And although Jenny does visit the shed with friends, it looks to me like it's the perfect size for one.

Hearing about Tina's trip and reading about Jenny's little house filled me with a level of envy that is downright unattractive. My life is overflowing with work and family! Those are incredible blessings! Why do I need to get away from them?

Like many of you, no doubt, the thought of going away by myself makes me feel guilty. As if I were abandoning my post. Shirking my duties. Being selfish. I've heard that analogy about the airplane oxygen mask a million times, reminding me that I need to take care of myself first, yada, yada, yada. "If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." Yes, yes, I know! But whether I'm happy or not, it still doesn't make the guilt go away.

In the halls of *Real Simple,* we talk about September as "Mom's new year." You know: Good-bye, summer vacation—hello, back-to-the-grind. This (newish) year, if you feel that you need to escape your life for a while, know that you are not alone. Actually, that's the problem—you're not alone. So let's make a resolution together: For once in our lives, we will do the oxygen-mask thing. (But try to find a less tired metaphor.) Whether we build a house in the woods like Jenny, take three days on a river like Tina, or just find an afternoon to sneak away, we will find some time alone—and leave the guilt behind, along with everything else.

**HAVE YOU LISTENED TO *REAL SIMPLE*'S PODCASTS?**
We have four of them—on everything from negotiating household conflicts (The Labor of Love) to navigating the confusion of your 20s (Adulthood Made Easy), handling irritating personalities (I Want to Like You), and boiling down kitchen basics (Things Cooks Know). There are new episodes every week. Go to realsimple.com/podcasts and *listen for free.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY PERRY HAGOPIAN; HAIR BY PAUL WARREN USING RENE FURTERER FOR ART DEPARTMENT; MAKEUP BY MELISSA SILVER FOR MAYBELLINE NEW YORK. BY MALENE BIRGER EMBELLISHED BLOUSE, $495, SHOPBOP.COM.

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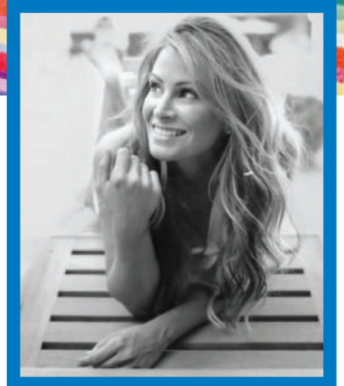
**BLEND PATTERNS** "Patterns are a great way to give richness and texture, so don't hold back. Your room should be like any good party, with a bunch of different, interesting personalities mingling away!"

**MIX WOODS** "Choosing furniture that's all the same type is the quickest way to ensure that your beautiful wood pieces will be lost in the crowd, since they'll blend together. Try contrasting rich, deep finishes with lighter, brighter woods to make them all stand out."



TRACY HUTSON

# SHAKE IT UP

Although it may seem like the safest way to design a beautiful room, matching everything together is actually a definite don't. According to master interior-design consultant and TV personality **Tracy Hutson**, it makes for a dull-looking space. Here are her quick tips on how to mix it up.

It took Tracy Hutson years to develop her award-winning aesthetic so she could help you design your dream room. But you can easily master the way you bank in minutes.

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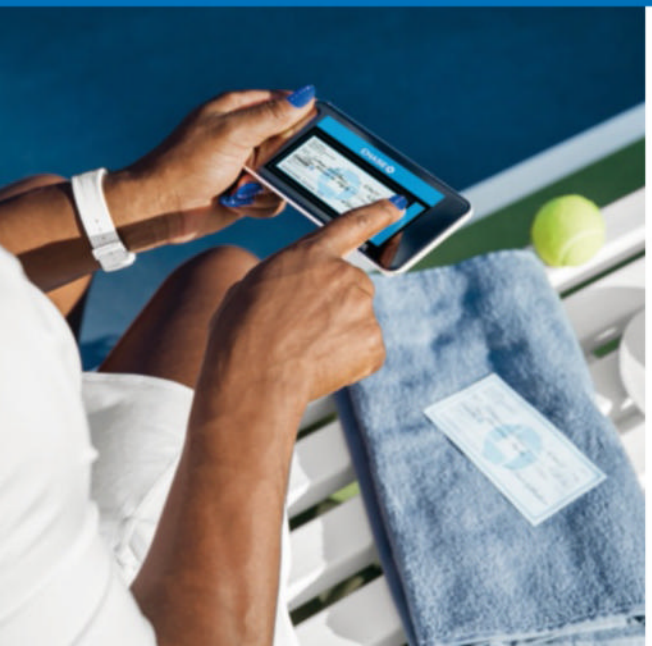

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# Your Words

## Q.

What item should every woman have in her closet?

## A.

### The workhorse white shirt.

A crisp blouse, ironed and ready to wear. Mine is always there to top off slacks, jeans, or a skirt when I get a last-minute dinner invitation or someone drops by. And it's essential on those "What do I wear to work?" mornings, when I don't feel like dressing up but want to look nice. Add a scarf or a colorful necklace and I feel put together, even if I'm frazzled underneath.

**LYNDA RETTICK, Bloomington, Illinois**

A garment steamer! It has made my life so much easier and faster.

**COLETTE ELLIS, Ventura, California**

FIND OUT THE BEST WAY TO POLISH GOLD JEWELRY AT REALSIMPLE.COM/CLEANGOLD.

### A piece of legacy jewelry.

Something with great sentimental value that you pull out whenever you need to stand a little taller and shine a little brighter.

**CHRISTA PHIBBS, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina**

A neutral, long cashmere cardigan that makes you feel like a million bucks and can be worn with everything from jeans to pj pants.

**@JENMCKAY**

### That go-to little black dress.

**It should be rather non-descript, so you can dress it up with heels and pearls or just throw on tennis shoes for a casual outing.**

**KARLA STEPHEN, South Pasadena, California**

A pair of red shoes. It's a pop of color and makes you feel sassy.

**@TANYARIVERAON2**

### A donation bin.

KEEP A LARGE BAG TO STASH THOSE UNWORN OR UNWANTED CLOTHES. IT'S EASIER TO PART WITH THINGS AS YOU IDENTIFY THEM. THEN ONCE THE BAG IS FULL, YOU GRAB IT AND HEAD TO THE NEAREST DONATION CENTER OR CHARITY.

**MEGAN MERCIER, Wilton, New York**

**Illustration by Ben Wiseman**

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A denim jacket. Throw it over anything from a silk shell to a beachy maxidress.
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## Comfy shoes.

FIND ONES THAT FIT LIKE A GLOVE AND FEEL LIKE NOTHING AT ALL. YOU CAN CONQUER THE WORLD IF YOUR FEET DON'T HURT.
**CYNTHIA VENGRAITIS, Maplewood, New Jersey**

## A smile from ear to ear.

**It's as simple as it is free, as approachable as it is sexy and alluring, as classy as it is regular. This little number never goes out of style, and it always fits. A smile has to be the most attractive thing that any woman can put on every day.**

**JENNIFER DEGENHARDT, Norwalk, Connecticut**

## A memory box.

Every woman should have a secret box in her closet whose contents change as she gets older. From first love letters and concert-ticket stubs to baby teeth and snips of grandchildren's hair, it's a reminder of who she is and the life that she has lived.
**KELLY MACMICHAEL, Mount Jackson, Virginia**

WANT MORE WARDROBE ESSENTIALS? CHECK OUT PAGES 67 AND 77.

## A great-fitting bra.

IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL AND LOOK YOUR BEST. IF YOUR FOUNDATION GARMENTS DON'T DO THEIR JOBS WELL, YOU CAN'T EXPECT THE FINISHED LOOK TO BE POLISHED.
**KIMBERLY MCKEOUGH, Fairhope, Alabama**

A wine fridge.
**CAROLINE MARY GREGORY, Melbourne, Australia**

## SUBSCRIBER OF THE MONTH

**MICHELLE BREWINGTON**

**HER ANSWER:** Confidence! I feel that if every woman had confidence in her abilities, her looks, and her value, we wouldn't worry as much—because every outfit, every garment, would fit like a glove. Confidence is built over time. The sooner we start to teach our young girls that having confidence will help them shine regardless of what they wear, the better.

**STATS:** 44; married, with three stepchildren; project manager for an IT company; Springfield, Virginia.

**WHAT DO YOU NEVER LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT?** My lipstick, my iPhone, and my sense of humor.

**WHAT'S YOUR GO-TO DISH FOR FALL PARTIES?** Apple cake or sweet potato pie (my husband's signature dessert).

**WHO IS YOUR HERO?** My mom, Janice Sims. She is a beautiful person with amazing strength. She's a cancer survivor, and even in retirement she's as busy as ever—learning Spanish, Pilates, yoga, and Tai Chi!

**WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?** I grew up in the Ebenezer A.M.E. Church in Fort Washington, Maryland, and the pastors were a big part of my development. This quote is one of many messages that stuck with me: "You can't see the future, so you'll never know you've made a right decision until you make it. Use everything you have been taught, do the best you can do, then walk into your life and into your moment. You'll know it's the right decision based on the consequences. Regardless, it will all be fine. Just never lose sight of who you are."

A statement necklace is a must. You can change the look of a T-shirt, dress, or button-down. And it always fits, no matter how much your weight fluctuates.
**TERRI FENZIL-SALVINO, Telford, Pennsylvania**

## Wooden hangers.

My goodness, wire hangers should be against the law. Plastic hangers are so...1990s. But wooden hangers make it look like I care about my clothes. Yes, they do take up space, but they keep me from being a clothes hoarder.
**REBECCA STUHLMILLER, Stockerau, Austria**

**UPCOMING QUESTION**
What is the most surprisingly useful gift you've ever received?

Go to realsimple.com/yourwords and let us know your answer to this question. Your response could appear on these pages

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# the Realist

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE FOR MODERN TIMES

PROP STYLING BY SARAH GUIDO-LAAKSO

## THE END OF PUNCTUATION?!?

Written by Kaitlyn Pirie

Photograph by Yasu + Junko

YOU TEXT your friend Christine and suggest inviting Jen to dinner tonight. Christine replies, "OK."—with a *period.* Instantly you know that something's wrong. Thanks to the lax communication habits technology has ushered in, the humble period in a text "can be taken as the flat intonation of someone suppressing irritation," says Tyler Schnoebelen, Ph.D., the founder and chief analyst at Idibon, a language analytics company in San Francisco. If Christine were truly OK with Jen's joining in, chances are she would have ended her tiny missive with an exclamation point (today's period!) or nothing at all. As we approach National Punctuation Day (September 24), let's recognize the old and new roles of, say, asterisks (d'oh *facepalm*) and question marks (why do they so often travel in groups nowadays?????). Will punctuation ever be the same again? Schnoebelen says probably not: "Language is constantly changing, and people are great at adapting it to their needs. But the transition doesn't happen evenly and can cause confusion." Luckily, there are few communication mysteries that a simple :-) can't solve.

NEW USES FOR OLD THINGS

# ROLLING PIN

**WINNER**

**RIBBON ORGANIZER:** Save leftover grosgrain to adorn another day. Wrap ribbon around a rolling pin to keep it smooth and tidy; use a straight pin to hold it in place.
—idea from KATHRYN HOLLAND, Tallahassee, Florida

**RUNNER-UP**

**SWEATER DRYER:** Don't wring out your freshly hand-washed crewneck. That will twist and stretch the fibers. Instead, lay the garment flat on a towel and go over the knit with a rolling pin (working from the center to the edges) to gently push out the water.
—idea from ROSEMARY BEAUVAIS, Houston

**RUNNER-UP**

**LOBSTER TOOL:** A less frustrating way to extract meat from those narrow legs? Push out the meat in one easy swoop by rolling the pin over each leg, starting at the closed end.
—idea from SALLY WILLARD, Bedford, New Hampshire

**RUNNER-UP**

**TOWEL BAR:** The perfect addition for a country kitchen. Simply prop the handles of a wooden rolling pin on two metal coat hooks. *Ta-da!* A fitting display for vintage tea towels.
—idea from BERNADETTE PERRY, Brownsburg, Indiana

**STAY TUNED FOR MORE CLEVER WINNERS OF OUR 2015 "NEW USES FOR OLD THINGS" CONTEST**

Throughout the year, we'll feature the smartest, most creative ideas straight from *RS* readers like you.

Photograph by Yasu + Junko

PROP STYLING BY SARAH GUIDO-LAAKSO; ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER OUMANSKI

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# Now what?!?

## Smart solutions for life's little disasters

### How can I make my smartphone battery last longer?

SARA L., via e-mail

**THE FIX:** Turn off auto brightness and dim the display in settings; the screen itself sucks up a lot of energy. To make the screen go black more quickly, adjust it under "screen timeout" on many Android phones or "auto-lock" on iPhones. Once your phone has reached 100 percent, unplug it. "Over time, the battery can lose 10 to 15 percent effectiveness if overcharged," says Kirk Parsons, a senior director of wireless services for J.D. Power and Associates. Also shut off Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, and location services if not using them, and disable the feature that lets apps update automatically. Still need more juice? Invest in a powered case or a portable battery ($13 to $40, jackery.com).

**HAVE A DISASTER** that needs solving? E-mail your problem to askrealsimple@realsimple.com.

### I left a leather jacket in a suitcase for a week. Now it's badly creased.

LEE HANSON, via e-mail

**THE FIX:** Unzip or unbutton the coat and whirl it in the dryer on low heat with a few dry bath towels for five minutes, says Amir Imankhan, the owner of LA Leather Cleaners, in Los Angeles. The towels will protect the jacket while the heat works out the wrinkles. Then remove the jacket from the dryer and place it on a hanger for a few hours. For deep wrinkles, place a cotton pillowcase on top of the jacket and apply an iron on low heat with (very important) no steam. If you still see creases, head to a leather-cleaning pro.

### How do I get my toddler to stop throwing things all over the house and making a mess?

S.W., via Facebook

**THE FIX:** Turn his love of throwing into a game. Toddlers tend to throw things because they have little control over their impulses, says psychologist Tovah Klein, Ph.D., the director of the Barnard College Center for Toddler Development, in New York City, and the author of *How Toddlers Thrive.* If your tot is happily tossing toys, he may just be testing limits, or he may be curious about what will happen when the rubber ducky hits the floor *(boing!)*. Instead of fighting him, tell your son what he can throw, then make a game of throwing the right things. When you catch him in the act, redirect him by saying, "Let's throw socks in the hamper" (and demonstrate it for him) or "Let's go outside and toss a ball." With luck, after a few instances of your giving him a place where he *can* throw things, his behavior will change.

Written by Michelle Crouch

Illustration by Peter Oumanski

THANK YOU TO KEN YARMOSH, CEO OF MOBILE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY SAVVYAPPS.COM; MICHELE BORBA, ED.D., AUTHOR OF *THE BIG BOOK OF PARENTING SOLUTIONS.*

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# LEATHER

**Whether you fall for faux or splurge on the real deal, you're sure to stand out in these fierce (yet feminine) finds.**

**1 ELEVATED EARRINGS**
Half-moon danglers are extra luxe with chevron-embossed leather insets. $118, tedrossi.com.

**2 WARDROBE MVP**
This sophisticated number can rock a Monday-morning presentation *and* that engagement party. Bonus: pockets! Veda leather dress, $525, 212-219-8332.

**3 CHUNKY AND TRIBAL**
Toughen up a neutral crew-neck with burgundy leather and gold plate. $290, shop.lizziefortunato.com.

**4 SKIRT WITH SWING**
Prim pleats get the faux-leather treatment, and the result is unexpectedly cool. $130, bananarepublic.com.

**5 WRIST CANDY**
A single metallic cuff can take you from desk to dinner. $70 each, avmaxnyc.com.

**6 ROCKER VEST**
For playful contrast, layer this waist-cinching style over a blush sweater. Simply Vera Vera Wang faux vest, $68, kohls.com.

Written by
Brandi Broxson

Photographs by
Philip Friedman



SOFT STYLING BY MAI TRAN

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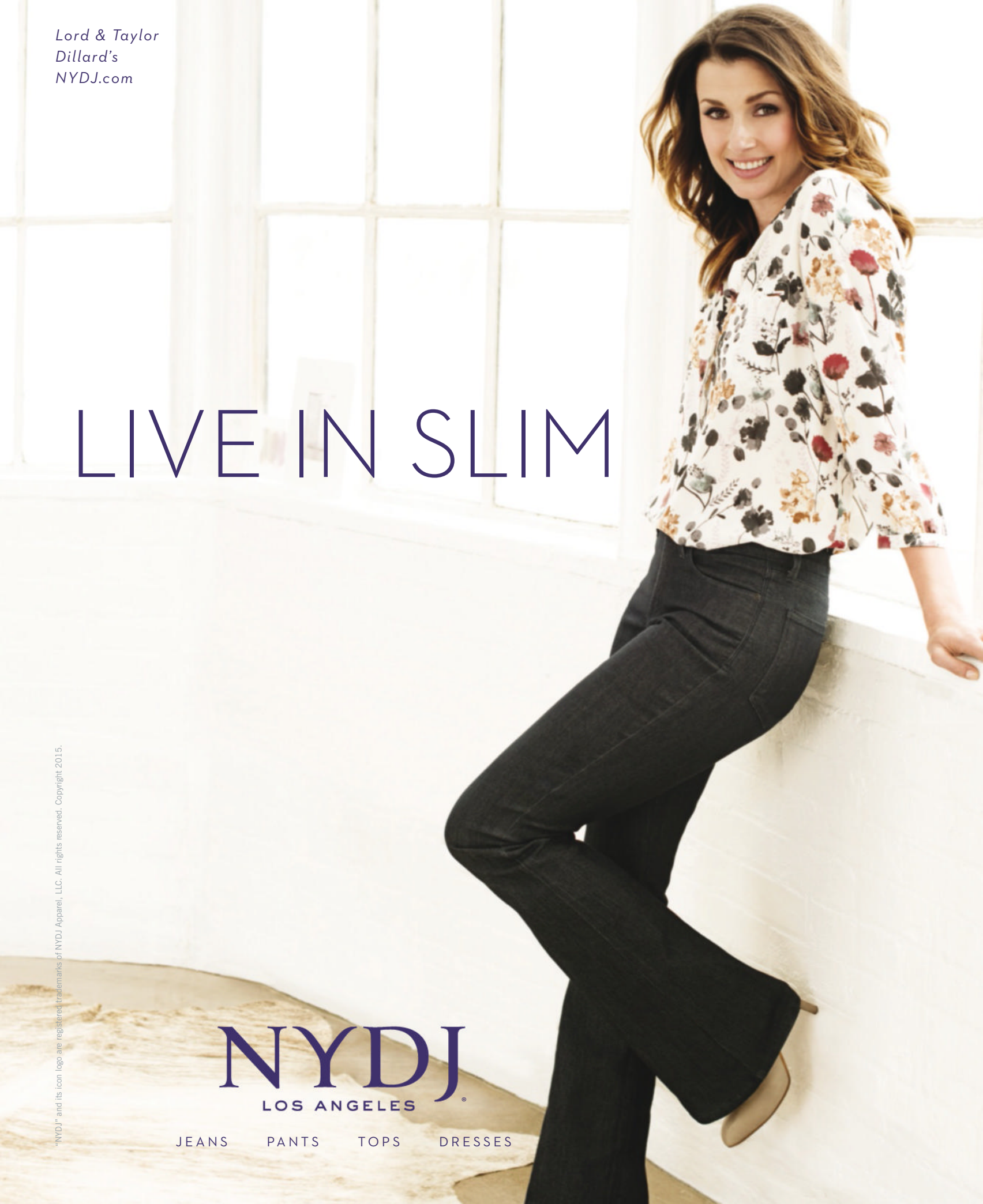
# LIVE IN SLIM



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# Thin lips

**Maybe you weren't born with an Angelina pout. Or maybe your lips have deflated over time. (Alas, they lose volume with age.) Charlotte Tilbury, an international celebrity makeup artist in London, offers her three steps for achieving full results.**

Written by Jenny Jin
Photograph by Elinor Carucci

### 1. Prep your skin.

"Dry lips tend to look dull and flat," says Tilbury. First gently remove flakes with a scrub, like Tony Moly Kiss Kiss Lip Scrub ($10, urbanoutfitters.com). Next, swipe on a hydrating balm, such as Too Faced La Crème Lip Balm ($22, toofaced.com). This will help fill in fine lines and create a smooth surface.

### 2. Go nude.

"Steer clear of dark colors, as they can make lips appear smaller," warns Tilbury. Using a nude pencil, like Lip Cheat Lip Liner in Pillow Talk ($22, charlottetilbury.com), lightly trace over your lip line, extending slightly beyond the edges. "Go back with concealer and a brush to fix smudges and make the line more pronounced," says Tilbury. Fill in the entire lip with pencil, then apply a creamy lipstick in a similar shade.

### 3. Add strategic sparkle.

Dab a bit of highlighter (or shimmery eye shadow) on your Cupid's bow to bring depth to your lips. Follow with a shiny neutral gloss, like L'Oréal Paris Colour Riche Le Gloss in Golden Splash or Baby Blossom ($8 each, at drugstores), just on the center of your top and bottom lips. "This reflects light and provides a 3-D effect," says Tilbury.

LARGE PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TRUNK ARCHIVE; SMALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY KINNI

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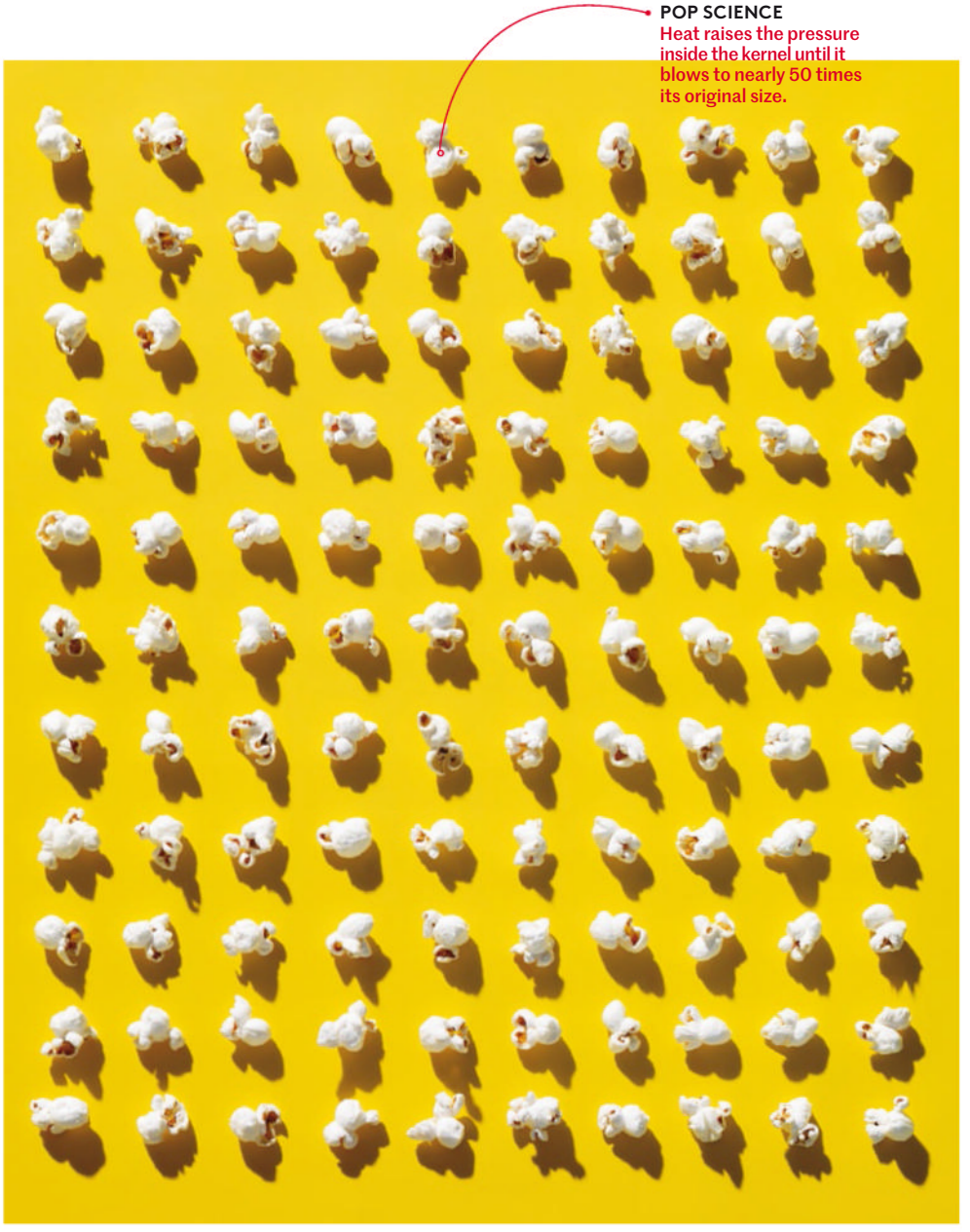
THE STAPLE

# POPCORN

**Americans down 16 billion quarts of popcorn a year. Good thing it's pretty healthful. Compared with other snack-aisle options, the freshly popped stuff stands out as a minimally processed whole grain made with only oil and salt. So don't limit it to Netflix nights: Toss it on soups, salads, and even ice cream sundaes for a bit of salty crunch.**

Recipes by Lindsay Hunt
Photograph by Yasu + Junko




## 3 QUICK IDEAS

RECIPE

### Peanut butter and chocolate popcorn bars

HANDS-ON TIME **20 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME **30 MINUTES**
MAKES **12 BARS**

Melt 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, ½ cup creamy peanut butter, one 10-ounce bag marshmallows, and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt in a large pot over medium-low heat, stirring, until smooth, 5 to 7 minutes. Fold in 10 cups popped plain popcorn and ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips. Press into a buttered 9-by-13-inch pan. Chill for at least 10 minutes before slicing.

EASY UPGRADE

### Pesto popcorn

Toss 10 cups hot, freshly popped plain popcorn with ½ cup finely grated Parmesan and ⅓ cup pesto. Serve immediately.

EASY UPGRADE

### Popcorn-topped cupcakes

Press 4 cups popped plain popcorn or kettle corn onto 12 chocolate-frosted cupcakes, dividing evenly.

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The tastiest popcorn is made fresh on the stovetop. To find out how, turn to page 171.

PROP STYLING BY SARAH GUIDO-LAAKSO

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# Making friends as a grown-up

**Shasta Nelson, the author of *Friendships Don't Just Happen!* and the founder of GirlFriend Circles.com, a women's friendship matching site, shares some realistic advice. (And, yes, it *is* awkward for everyone.)**



**Can you expect to make close friends once you're past your 30s?**
Yes! Research shows we're replacing half our close friends every seven years, even into our 60s. It helps to know that the revolving door is a normal part of life.

**What's a mistake grown-ups make when trying to meet new friends?**
Thinking they need to look for a twin. If you're single, say, you need another single buddy. Open your mind about whom you're willing to be friendly with and focus on what you may have in common. It's not important what those things are.

**How do you spot someone who's right?**
Friendships are not discovered—you're not going out to find that ideal BFF. Friendships are fostered. Research reveals that we can bond with almost anyone. A study of cadets at a police academy showed that friendships there grew based on alphabetical order—people bonded with those seated close by. We've all experienced a form of this—a random coworker who became a confidante because you saw her continually.

**How do you move past small talk with someone you'd like to be friends with?**
Inquire about an area you have in common, but in a way that's more personal.

Written by Yolanda Wikiel
Illustration by Peter Oumanski

If your kids share a play group, don't discuss what the kids are up to—talk about how you're dealing with things. For instance: "How has this stage of parenting been for you?"

**And then what?**
Initiate plans. Many of us will invite someone out once, then think it's the other person's turn. If she doesn't step up, we assume she doesn't like us, because our fear of rejection is so high. What you should be thinking is: *Did that person say yes? Did we have a good time?* Great. Repeat. As long as she says yes two out of four times, keep asking. Most relationships have a primary initiator; the other person may give in different ways—she could be the primary listener.

**That sounds hard for introverts.**
Introverts are better at other friendship-building skills, like being consistent and going deeper. The process of making friends is awkward for everyone. We've never danced this dance together before. Are we the kind of friends who Facebook or text? Are we lunch-once-a-month friends? The more we do it, the less awkward it gets with that person.

**Why is it so much harder for adults than for kids?**
Consistency is a major requirement for building a friendship—and keeping that up is trickier with busy work and family schedules. This is why work is one of the best places to meet friends—your time together is already built into your day.

**Can you find friends via social media?**
Facebook and Instagram can help support existing bonds, but it's not easy to make new friends online, unless it's through professional networking or a shared Facebook group. A cold introduction can come off as creepy.

**What about the challenge of making friends as a couple?**
The dream is finding a couple and you all really like one another, but even if the guys don't totally hit it off, the foursome is worth continuing. Think about building a social circle and have fun.

**How much time does it take for an adult to make a new friend?**
I've found from surveying women that it usually takes six to eight meaningful interactions before they feel comfortable calling someone a friend. In terms of a person you would confide in, it may take a year or two. To take a new relationship to the next level, move the friendship out of the context in which you met. In other words, work pals who go hiking or mom friends who go out for coffee, sans kids.

**Any parting words of encouragement?**
You're better off cultivating five relationships than zeroing in on one. The more people you let in, the greater the chance of making a close pal.

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# FOOD FESTIVALS

**Here's a tasty tribute to how the world celebrates what sustains us, past to present—because we're all grateful for the grub (and wine, of course!).**

## 500 B.C. TO A.D. 2ND CENTURY

Greeks pay homage to the god of wine, Dionysus, during a drunken three-day festival called Anthesteria, where even children participate.

## 3RD CENTURY B.C. TO 2ND CENTURY B.C.

In harvest season, ancient Egyptians celebrate the Beautiful Feast of the Valley. In honor of the cow goddess, Hathor, they picnic overnight in front of their ancestors' tombs.

"An English festival called Harvest Home continued in the New World, eventually developing into Thanksgiving," says Lucy M. Long, the director of the Center for Food and Culture, in Bowling Green, Ohio.

## 1417

Germany's Dürkheimer Wurstmarkt starts off as a pious pilgrimage for the feast of Saint Michael. Today it's thought to be the world's largest wine festival. More than 600,000 revelers attend each year and consume 84,500 gallons of the region's finest Rieslings and reds.

## 1621

Grateful for a bountiful harvest after a year of illness and food shortages, Pilgrims to the New World hold the first Thanksgiving, which includes deer, duck, and, yup, turkey.

## 1818

Originally a cattle show, Topsfield Fair, in Massachusetts, eventually grows to include chow and becomes the first country fair. Today it draws crowds for outrageous fare, including chocolate-covered bacon, fried bubble gum, and fried Kool-Aid.

Need some grease to soak up that booze? In 1910 this wine festival adds sausages to the menu.

## LATE 1800S TO EARLY 1900S

Old-world harvest celebrations sell out. One example is Michigan's 1926 National Cherry Festival, which begins as a tradition of blessing the cherry crop, notes Jim Giesen, an agricultural historian at Mississippi State University: "But in the years that follow, hotels and local businesses take over as a way to increase tourism."

## MID TO LATE 1900S

Food festivals spread from sea to shining sea and abroad: The Maine Lobster Festival shells out more than 20,000 pounds of crustaceans a year, California's Gilroy Garlic Festival preps pungent dishes for 100,000 visitors, and Italy's International Alba White Truffle Fair offers guests the chance to sniff out (and taste) countless varieties.

## 2000S

The "foodie" era begins: Celebrity chefs go from the best-seller list to center stage at massive events. Fans come to watch Bobby Flay make tacos at the New York City Wine & Food Festival and Rachael Ray flip burgers at Miami's South Beach Wine & Food Festival. Americans now revere historically working-class foods, thanks to the TV chefs featured at the festivals, says Giesen.

## 2015

Meals and music collide so people can pig out *and* rock out. San Francisco's Outside Lands host the coolest cuisine-centric concert with the Black Keys and Sam Smith, while Kendrick Lamar and the Pixies hit the stage at the Sweetlife Festival, in Columbia, Maryland. This month, Kings of Leon head up Nashville's Music City Food + Wine Festival.

"Positive engagement" during a food festival is a good predictor of food-buying behavior six months later, says a new study in *Tourism Management*.

**Written by N. Jamiyla Chisholm**



PHOTOGRAPHS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM/WIKI COMMONS; THE FOOD PASSIONATES/CORBIS; ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES; JAMES BAIGRIE/GETTY IMAGES; ULRIKE WELSCH/THE BOSTON GLOBE VIA GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM/WIKI COMMONS. THANK YOU TO KEN ALBALA, DIRECTOR OF FOOD STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC, IN SAN FRANCISCO; DENVER GRANINGER, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE; ELISABETH LUARD, AUTHOR OF *THE OLD WORLD KITCHEN*; KATHLEEN WALL, COLONIAL FOODWAYS CULINARIAN AT PLIMOTH PLANTATION, IN PLYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS; PETER J. KIM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM OF FOOD AND DRINK.

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# Little helpers

## 4 ingenious products to make your day easier

**1 DRY-ERASE TAPE**
Wondering how old those leftovers are? Or if the pots in the dishwasher are clean or dirty? Now you can stick this reusable label on nearly anything and update it in a flash. $3, walmart.com.

**2 RAKE-SHAPED BROOM**
Get into the groove (of your deck, that is) during fall cleanup. The curved bristles on this handy sweeper make it easy to tackle pesky nooks and crannies. $30, thehandycamel.com.

**3 DIVIDED LAUNDRY BAG**
Go to the dark side—and the light side—with this easy-tote sack that lets you sort as you fill. Great for dorm dwellers. $13, justsolutions.com.

**4 POCKET PILL REMOVER**
Why is it that you notice lint balls only after you leave the house? Thankfully, you can carry this tiny fuzz collector (or any of the other Scotch Essentials garment tools) wherever you go. $5 to $8, amazon.com.

Written by Tanya Christian

Photographs by Philip Friedman

## Eco quandary

### IS A GREEN DRY CLEANER ACTUALLY BETTER THAN A REGULAR ONE?

Maybe. The solvent often used in traditional dry cleaning, known as perc (short for perchloroethylene), has been linked to cancer, neurological disorders, and kidney disease. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that dry-cleaning employees exposed daily to the chemical face an increased risk, but that those who come into contact with only residual amounts (meaning you and your family) do not. Before you go running to a "green cleaner," however, know that there's no EPA certification for those making eco-friendly claims. So do your own investigating. Ask your pro what solvent he plans to use. If he says water, silicone, or carbon dioxide, you're good. But, warns Paul D. Roepe, a professor of chemistry, biochemistry, and cellular and molecular biology at Georgetown University, if you hear n-propyl bromide or trichloroethane, be warned: Those are by-products of toxic petroleum and no better than the solvents used in traditional dry cleaning.

*–KAITLYN PIRIE*

SOFT STYLING BY MAI TRAN; ILLUSTRATION BY PETER OUMANSKI. THANK YOU TO ANN HARGROVE, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS FOR THE NATIONAL CLEANERS ASSOCIATION; JON MEIJER, DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP FOR THE DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY INSTITUTE.

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GOOD READ

# The discomfort zone

## A self-described type-A control freak takes an improv class—and struggles to think on her feet instead of staying in her head.

Written by Jenny Jin
Photograph by Christopher Kutner

AT THE START of this year, I decided to take an improv course. I wanted to shake things up, stretch myself, try something new. To be completely honest, I was also hoping to unearth a hidden—and undeniable—talent. What if improv was my calling and I just didn't know it yet? After all, I've always been a late bloomer. (Puberty was a 10-year-long affair for me.) So with much hope and false confidence, I signed up for an Improv 101 course at the Upright Citizens Brigade Training Center, in New York City. Cofounded by Amy Poehler and the stomping ground of the now established *Broad City* duo, UCB seemed like the perfect place to start my (potential) career in comedy.

Things got off to a rocky start. In an uncharacteristic move, I somehow mixed up my dates and missed the first two classes. This, of course, made me feel more anxious. But I marched (OK, meekly walked) into the room and tried to hide my mounting fears—and sweaty palms—as I met my already acquainted classmates for the first time. There were actresses, accountants, fashion bloggers, waitresses, yoga instructors—and me, the panicked beauty editor, who at that moment was ready to forfeit the tuition

TRUNK ARCHIVE

**About the author**
Jenny Jin is a beauty editor at *Real Simple*. When she's not testing makeup and writing about it, you can find her in a spin class—or a Taco Bell. Follow her @jyjin.

money and run out. "Most of you are here because at some point in your life you were told that you were funny," said Ben, our instructor. (I blame my best friend for encouraging this delusional behavior.)

For the next eight weeks, I spent three hours every Monday confined to a small, stark room with these supersize personalities who all seemed too experienced, too confident, and too damn hilarious to be in an introductory course. Luckily, there were a few fellow wallflowers; I clung to them like burrs on wool socks. Contrary to what I expected, there was very little guidance and absolutely no hand holding of any sort. (There was some actual hand holding in exercises. Awkward.) We were immediately thrust into rapid-fire scenes, which we initiated or joined based off a word or a phrase given by the instructor. If you were lucky, you got a suggestion that resonated with you: "Harry Potter" or "hip-hop." (Crushed it.) Most times you were stuck with a topic that left you with no place to go: "Amuse-bouche" or "torque wrench." (Cue panic.)

I found myself standing in the back line more than I wanted. Time stood still, as did I. My classmates threw themselves into scene after scene, while I agonized over the right thing to say. I was doing what came naturally to me (planning, self-editing), and the opposite of what we were being taught (being present, reacting). In improv, you're not supposed to think; you just do. Whether you're initiating a scene or walking into one that has already been established, you are supposed to go in without question and let things unfurl.

It all sounded so simple. But for me—precisely the type of person you want to stand behind during a TSA screening, because I only wear slip-on shoes and never, ever wear anything that might set off the metal detector—this was cruel and unusual. Alas, I trudged on, week after week, feeling more uncertain and unfunny. Walking from the subway station to class, I would give myself a hearty pep talk. *You are hilarious. You can do this. You are an improv goddess. Huzzah!* Then I'd enter the room and have complete amnesia.

Why was this so difficult for me? It clearly wasn't stage fright. I had spent most of my life performing: in choir, in a musical, in an a cappella group. One semester, I even tried my hand at becoming the next song-writing sensation on YouTube. (Shout out to my 75 subscribers: I will always love you.) But in improv, with no sheet music or rehearsed script to go off of, I realized that I was dependent on those things. I was seeking control in a world where there wasn't supposed to be any. It's possible that this need for order stemmed from the overwhelming lack of it I felt growing up. When your parents ambush you with not one, not two, but three moves between the already volatile ages of 14 and 16, it affects you in a lot of ways—both good and bad. The good is that I'm unafraid of change and regularly seek out new opportunities; the not-so-good is that I apparently need to have control over this change and everything that happens before, during, and after.

I wish I could say there was this pivotal moment in class where I suddenly learned to laugh at myself and roll with the punches. Instead, I was trying so hard that I exhausted myself, which led to my eventual surrendering. In most other scenarios, this could be seen as "giving up," but in improv it was exactly what I needed. I finally understood, through the fog of fatigue, that it wasn't about being the best in class or practicing until you were. It was about trusting in the things you already know to guide the things you don't.

And that applies to so much more than improv. I know that I want to run a marathon this year. I don't know if I'll finish it in one piece, but I definitely won't regret trying. I know I want to share this essay with people. I don't know how I'll feel when it's actually out there in the universe (or on my parents' fridge), but I certainly enjoyed writing it. Who knows? Maybe it will lead other type-A personalities to an improv course that will teach them how to loosen the reins a little.

Eight weeks passed and class culminated in a graduation show for our friends and family. Perhaps it was my newfound wisdom, or the two beers I had beforehand, but I felt strangely calm as we took the stage. I finally got off the back line and dove into scene after scene. I don't know if any of it was funny, but it sure was fun. ■

## LIFE LESSONS ESSAY CONTEST: WHAT SINGLE DECISION CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

**Would your world now be completely different—even unthinkable—if, at some point in the past, you hadn't made a seemingly random choice? Tell us about it. Maybe you stayed a few extra minutes at a party—and met your soul mate. Maybe you decided to have lunch with a friend or quit a job or just took the long way home. If you can't imagine the rest of your life without what happened next, write it down and share it with us.**

Go to **realsimple.com/lifelessonscontest** for complete contest rules and to read the winning essays from last year's contest.

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# Modern Manners

*REAL SIMPLE*'S ETIQUETTE EXPERT, CATHERINE NEWMAN, OFFERS HER BEST ADVICE ON YOUR SOCIAL QUANDARIES.

**How are women supposed to react to random men who try to talk to them while they walk down the street? I imagine it's supposed to be flattering, but it's usually offensive. If I immediately put up a self-righteous wall, I'm perpetuating negative male-female stereotypes—or, worse, blowing off someone who may have a genuine question.**
R.M.

According to a recent survey from the nonprofit group Stop Street Harassment, 65 percent of women have been harassed in public at some point in their lives. Such harassment can constitute a gateway crime, paving the way for more dangerous kinds of gender-based violence. In other words, you're right to be wary, and you're not alone in being offended: Catcalls are not a consensual interaction, and women can feel intimidated at worst and annoyed at best. Even men who have good intentions are living in a world where lots of men don't; they need to learn that yelling compliments on the street is never a simple act of flattery. You should ignore the comments and worry more about helping to change the culture for all women than about causing offense. If someone has a genuine question ("I'm late for a job interview! Which way is State Street?"), they won't start it with "Hey, baby" or an observation about your hindquarters. Men are free to admire you quietly as you walk past, and you are free to engage in mutual and welcome flirtation if and when you choose to, but your body is not an invitation or an ornament. And you have a right to move through the world unhindered.

**About Catherine**
The author of the parenting memoir *Waiting for Birdy,* Catherine Newman has shared her wisdom on matters ranging from family and friends to happiness and pickling in numerous publications. She gets advice from her husband and two opinionated children in Amherst, Massachusetts.

PORTRAIT BY SARAH MAYCOCK

**I have a good friend from work who has a small apartment with three cats. I've visited her home a few times, and there is an unbearable cat-urine odor. You can smell it before you enter! The cats have some sort of problem; they urinate everywhere instead of their litter box. I love this friend's company, and I even love the cats, but I do not want to hang out at her place. She keeps inviting me over for dinner, even though I've mentioned that the smell is too much. I usually suggest we try a new restaurant in the neighborhood instead. I feel bad, and I don't know how to reply to her repeated invitations without hurting her feelings.**
R.R.

Typically, you would be asking about the least offensive way to alert her to the stench, but you've already done that! What you should do next is the issue. Assume that, accustomed as she is to the cat-pee funk, it's easy for your friend to forget your differing perception of it. (I'm thinking about how revolted I am now by the smell of cigarette smoke, even though my dad chain-smoked through my entire childhood and I barely noticed.) "I'm dying to see you," you can say, "and I'm sure if I lived with it, I'd get used to the cat smell, but I can't deal with it. Let's meet somewhere else!" If she seems to crave the intimacy of a home setting, invite her to your place instead of a restaurant. As a cat lover, I'm sympathetic, but it sounds as if your friend needs a reality check. Ideally, this conversation will be one.

**When my husband and I take my 18-month-old daughter to family functions, friends and family members are always trying to get her to stop sucking her thumb. They playfully say, "You don't need that!" and try to pull her thumb from her mouth. This is her only coping mechanism when she is tired or unhappy, and she really doesn't do it often. Plus, I'm afraid that everyone else making a big deal about it may make her want to suck her thumb even more. How can I politely ask people not to talk to her about it?**
M. M.

Nothing goads adults more than a baby's ability to self-soothe. A thumb! Why isn't she using mojitos and hot yoga and white-noise machines like the rest of us? If saying this would make any of your thumb-yankers laugh—and think twice—go ahead and try it. Otherwise you're stuck dealing with unwanted parenting advice in the usual way: Remind friends and family that, as a parent, you're picking your battles pretty carefully. "This isn't one of ours right now," you can say. "She will probably stop on her own at some point, and in the meantime we don't want to draw attention to it and make her self-conscious." Or say to your daughter, "Don't worry about Uncle Andy. He's just jealous because his thumb isn't as tasty as yours." Becoming a parent means being true to your children and their needs without apology or embarrassment. Support your daughter's thumb sucking and consider this important practice for whatever might come next.

**Coworkers are constantly asking for money ($5 to $20) for baby showers, holidays, weddings, birthdays, boss gifts, departure for new job, second baby shower, etc. It's too much! I get "the eye" when I don't contribute, and it makes me self-conscious. But can't I choose what I spend money on? If I don't give money, I don't eat the food or sign the card. I hate being put in this position. How do I nicely decline without causing a rift or being labeled a cheapskate?**
J. P.

Ideally, you would be able to share in the festive sentiments without shelling out constantly or being shamed. Anonymous donations should be de rigueur. Alas, discretion does not seem to be part of your office's party-all-the-time policy. Of course, you are free to abstain, but you'll surely keep getting the eye, especially if you come to work Antigua-tanned or wearing new jewelry. (*Oh, but she couldn't pitch in $5 for an ice cream cake?*) Try one of these options: Consider sending an e-mail to your colleagues in which you express your interest in being a team player and suggest some alternatives, like a joint monthly celebration of everyone's milestones. (Chances are good that you're not alone in your donation fatigue.) Another option—a kind of mental rejiggering—is to make "harmony at work" a line item in your personal budget. Think of this not as caving to compulsory gift giving but as a strategic investment in your own happiness. You spend a lot of time with your office mates; maybe it's worth 200 bucks over the course of the year to make the experience as pleasant as possible. Whatever you decide, find some way to contribute when an event arises: a token dollar amount, a plate of brownies, or—at the very least—your heartfelt well wishes.

**My boyfriend talks constantly when we're together (and we live together). One of the personality traits I love most about him is how talkative he is. But when I have a story to tell or some thoughts to relate, he interrupts before I finish. I don't want to hurt his feelings, but I want our conversations to be more two-sided. How do you think I should handle this?**
M. M.

You love him! And precisely because of that, you need to say something. Lead with the pleasure you express here. He's garrulous and engaged, and you appreciate it. Then explain that there is, however, a dynamic that's bothering you: You don't always get a chance to share your thoughts, and you would like to make that more of a priority. He is probably unaware of his monological tendencies. He's grown accustomed to running with his thoughts, after all. Let's hope he will be eager to redress them once you put the issue on his radar. Offer gentle reminders if he forgets: "Let me just finish my story here" or "Hang on, I want to say this without getting sidetracked." Practice may make perfect. And if it doesn't, my daughter recommends instituting the "talking stick" used in her preschool, passed around from speaker to speaker to draw attention to balance, fairness, and the ideal of uninterrupted speech.

**HAVE AN ETIQUETTE QUESTION?**

Submit your social conundrums to Catherine at **REALSIMPLE.COM/MODERNMANNERS.** Selected letters will be featured on these pages every month.

# BRIGHT IDEAS

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## BEAUTY & BALANCE

On April 17 and 18, Real Simple hosted its 2nd annual Beauty & Balance event—a pop-up experience highlighting the best beauty and wellness products, services, and techniques in New York City with a national extension at Pure Barre, the largest barre franchise in the country. On-site, guests enjoyed editor meet-and-greets, tips from expert stylists, specialized barre classes with master trainers, complimentary hair, makeup, and skincare treatments, food demonstrations, indulgent wine and chocolate pairings, and more.

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# 5 things that won't be a big deal down the road

It's as if these experts—a financial planner, a Pulitzer Prize–winning writer, a veteran parenting guru—have come back from the future to put your hand-wringing at ease. Ready to stop sweating the small stuff—for real?

Written by Rebecca Webber
Illustration by Shout

## 1

LAURA SCHARR-BYKOWSKY

### The impractical splurge.

I tried on a wedding dress 25 years ago, an ivory silk floor-length gown with short sleeves that fit like a glove. I absolutely loved it, but it was $1,500. I'm a practical person, so I ended up getting a $700 dress—bright white with long sleeves that were puffy at the top. (The Princess Diana look was popular then.) I cringe a little when I look at the pictures today. We had an inexpensive wedding, and we had done everything to keep it low-budget, so I really should have splurged on that dress and made that memory for myself. Don't regret spending on things that are tied to memories, like a vacation or a special piece of jewelry for an anniversary. As a financial planner, I can tell you—the real problem is impulse buying or constantly saying, "I've got to have that outfit." It's not the infrequent purchase decisions that hurt you—trust me.

## 2

ADELE FABER

### Your teenager's purple hair.

Kids go through phases. You don't need to worry about most of them or what they'll mean for the future. I spent years despairing over my son's limited diet. Now he's a gourmet cook. When my daughter was 19 or 20, I didn't know where she was for weeks. Turns out, she was in Mexico. She had met an artist! I was furious. Well, you know what? She married the artist, and now he's a science teacher. They are parents to my amazing grandchildren. Life, and growing up, is hard work. The best thing you can do for your kids is be someone they can talk to who helps them find clarity.

## 3

SHERYL WUDUNN

### Problems of privilege.

**We fret so much about which smartphone to get or that we weren't invited to a party. I've wasted time being annoyed because I had to buy a cross-country flight after the price went up. We take that disappointment, and we multiply that times a thousand. Lots of people across the world will never have enough money to celebrate a birthday or take a flight. It's obvious, but we all need to constantly repeat, "It's not the end of the world." The little things can cause stress and crowd the big picture. You may miss a real opportunity to solve a problem or make a difference in the world.**

## 4

BETH PORTOLESE

### Your career path.

I spent much of my career at FedEx, starting as a driver and working my way into human resources. Then I left to work at an investment bank. I thought investment bankers would be so much smarter and so much better than truck drivers, which they aren't. It was the worst work year I ever had. It was a mistake. But mistakes aren't a big deal. Women especially are under pressure to be perfect. Some of the most interesting things happen as a result of OMG-what-am-I-doing? And really, in 20 years, unless you were the CEO of Facebook, few people will care what your job title was.

## 5

DAN BUETTNER

### Having a ton of friends (or Twitter followers).

Concentrate on a small group of good friends, not a ton of cyber ones. In the five years I spent visiting parts of the world where people live unusually long and healthy lives, I found that those with the highest levels of well-being focused on face-to-face relationships. Research shows that the happiest people don't spend a ton of time on social media. You need a few friends you can call on a bad day and whom you genuinely like for who they are, not what they bring to the table. Also, I found people who have a drink or two a day live longer than non-drinkers, so have a glass of wine together.

THE EXPERTS

**LAURA SCHARR-BYKOWSKY** is a certified financial planner and principal at Ascend Financial Planning. She lives in Columbia, South Carolina.

**ADELE FABER** is a mother of three and a coauthor of *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk.* She lives on Long Island.

**SHERYL WUDUNN** is a Pulitzer Prize–winning writer and a coauthor, with husband Nicholas Kristof, of *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity.* She lives in New York.

**BETH PORTOLESE** is a human-resources director and the founder of the blog FiftyIstheNewFifty. She lives in New York City.

**DAN BUETTNER** is the author of *Blue Zones Solution: Eating and Living Like the World's Healthiest People.* He lives in Minneapolis.

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## BREATHE

**THIS MONTH'S EXPERT**

**CYNDI LEE**, the founder of the influential OM yoga Center, in New York City, now teaches yoga worldwide. She is the author of five books, including the memoir *May I Be Happy*. Find her at cyndilee.com.

When there's an anxiety-producing event looming—an important presentation, dental surgery, a first date—you can start to calm your nerves the day before with this exercise. Close your eyes and gently bring your lips together. Inhale through your nose. As you exhale (also through your nose), make a humming sound: "*Mmmmmm*." Let this hum last as long as it is comfortable. Then inhale and repeat. Don't try to control it too much. Just breathe in and hum out. If you try to extend the hum longer than is natural, you might tighten up. Play with the tone until you find the place where your "*mmmmmm*" flows out in a comfortable, lowish pitch, audible but quiet enough that no one except, say, the person right next to you on the bus would hear it. The humming breath has a way of loosening your jaw, mouth, lips, and tongue—areas that tend to tense up when you're nervous. Once you've found your hum, repeat it whenever you start to feel anxious—whether you're standing, sitting, or walking. Let it be easy and fun. Over the course of the day, the soothing effect will build, helping you become more and more relaxed for the big event.

Photograph by Takamasa Ota

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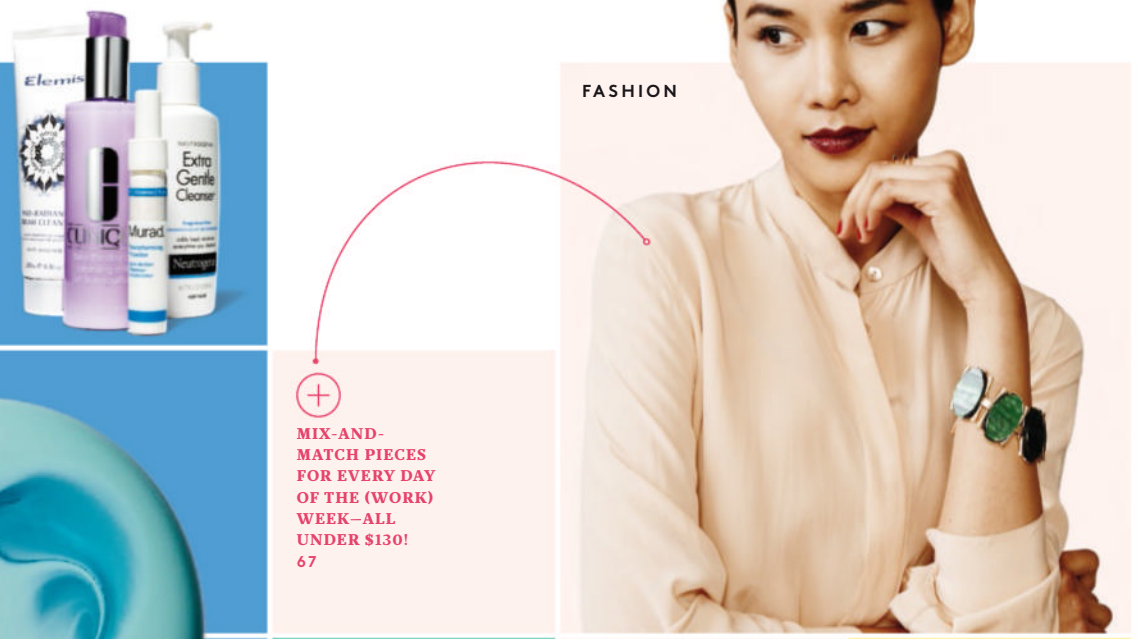

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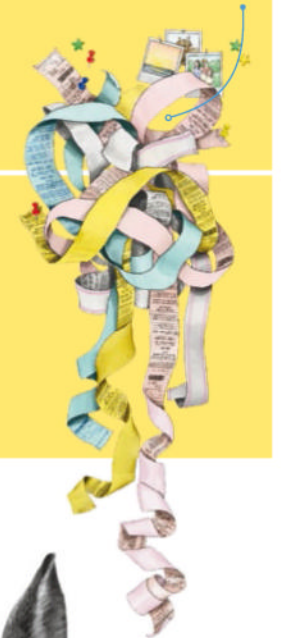

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# STYLE WISE

Talk about teamwork. These nine office essentials create a complete fall wardrobe that will see you from Monday to Friday—and beyond.

Written by
Rebecca Daly
Photographs by
Sascha Pflaeging

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Photographs by Philip Friedman

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**3**
**$60**
**THE LIMITED PENCIL SKIRT**
**TO BUY:** thelimited.com.

**4**
**$89**
**MARC FISHER PUMPS**
**TO BUY:** macys.com.

**5**
**$108**
**GUESS BLAZER**
**TO BUY:** macys.com.

**6**
**$119**
**ZARA LEATHER HANDBAG**
**TO BUY:** zara.com.

**7**
**$60**
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**$130**
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## BASICS, UPGRADED

The elements are pretty elemental—a tank, slim pants, some jewelry. But it's the details (a pixelated pattern, an emerald cuff) that give this outfit its sartorial flair.

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# FALL MVPS

**A new season doesn't have to mean a whole new closet—just focus on these five smartest trends.**

**1**
**DEUX LUX**
The evening-worthy iteration: a gold-studded clutch.
**TO BUY:** $90, deuxlux.com.

**2**
**KENNETH COLE**
This bucket style converts from a shoulder strap to a backpack for the best of both worlds.
**TO BUY:** $298, kennethcole.com.

**3**
**IVANKA TRUMP**
With its classic shape and color, this bag looks like a vintage-store score.
**TO BUY:** $395, nordstrom.com.

## A FRINGE BAG

It's the easiest way to test-drive fall's hippie-chic trend without going all-out. Comes in all manner of shapes and sizes; choose the one that will carry you farthest.

Written by Rebecca Daly
Photographs by Ralph Smith

SOFT STYLING BY BILL LAUGHLIN

**1**
**GUESS**
Crisscrossing cables give an otherwise traditional pullover an element of the unexpected.
**TO BUY:** $89, guess.com.

**2**
**RAOUL**
This emerald sweater will play up weekend jeans but is polished enough for the office, too.
**TO BUY:** $300, raoul.com.

**3**
**424 FIFTH**
A boxy, cropped cut looks great with a pair of high-waisted pants.
**TO BUY:** $149, lordandtaylor.com.

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InStyle

## WIDE-LEG TROUSERS

**Surprisingly flattering, this feminine, voluminous style is the newest way to upgrade your pants to "fancy."**

**1**
**ZARA**
Wear platforms with this dressy, silky pair for the ultimate leg-lengthening effect.
**TO BUY:** $129, zara.com.

**2**
**'S MAX MARA**
Even staid suiting material feels new in this of-the-moment silhouette.
**TO BUY:** $520, 212-879-6100.

**3**
**BANANA REPUBLIC**
Try the full-fashion version—a cotton-sateen wide-leg crop. Pair with flats for a relaxed look or heels if you need a little height.
**TO BUY:** $90, bananarepublic.com.

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**Dressy enough for the office but comfortable enough for running errands, these softly pointed slip-ons are flat-out chic.**

## 5 KEY PIECES

**1**
**JIMMY CHOO**
Take a walk on the wild side in this luxe printed calf-hair pair.
**TO BUY:** $625, jimmychoo.com.

**2**
**MARC FISHER LTD**
School-uniform style makes the grade in shiny silver.
**TO BUY:** $140, marcfisherfootwear.com.

**3**
**BODEN**
Feminine jewels sparkle even more brightly on borrowed-from-the-boys plaid.
**TO BUY:** $148, bodenusa.com.

**4**
**EXPRESS**
These penny loafers can replace tired black ballet flats.
**TO BUY:** $50, express.com.

**5**
**DELMAN**
Luxe details, like faux snakeskin and leather kilting, are cocktail-party ready.
**TO BUY:** $268, delmanshoes.com.

**6**
**DAVID ISAAC**
In a versatile python print, these flats will become your go-to shoes for work and weekend.
**TO BUY:** $165, shopdavidisaac.com.

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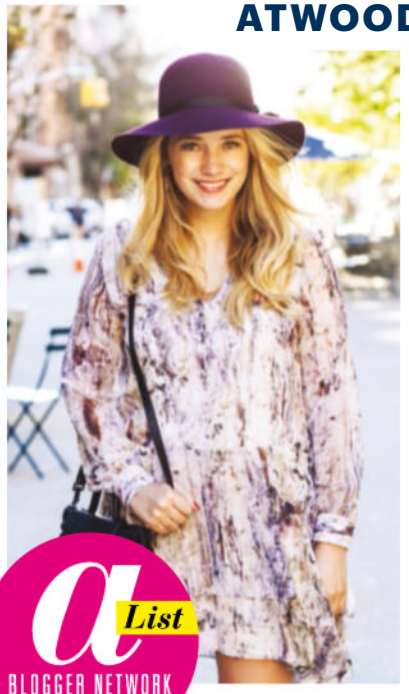
OFFERS
EVENTS
FINDS
GIVEAWAYS

## ▶ MEET THE BLOGGER: GRACE ATWOOD



a List
BLOGGER NETWORK
REAL SIMPLE

Grace Atwood is the founder of **thestripe.com**, where she catalogs the people, pieces, places, and projects that inspire her. Originally titled Stripes & Sequins, the blog was revamped for its 5th anniversary this year.

Grace grew up by the ocean on Cape Cod and is happiest by the water or on a beach. She graduated from Bentley University and lived in Boston for three years after college before making the move to New York. She is usually wearing something striped, is always laughing, and believes that life is too short to be taken seriously.

**FACEBOOK:** Stripes & Sequins

**TWITTER**: @graceatwood

**INSTAGRAM:** graceatwood

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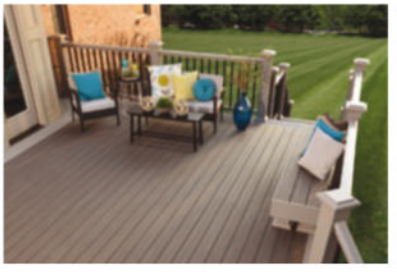

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## MODERN PEARLS

These new-wave designs will please everyone age 17 to 70-plus.

**1**
**R.J. GRAZIANO**
Simple and sculptural, this all-around-spiked bangle looks great alone or stands out in a stack.
**TO BUY:** $45 for a set of three, rjgraziano.com.

**2**
**GOLD PHILOSOPHY**
The inverted setting makes a subtle statement.
**TO BUY:** $172, goldphilosophy.com.

**3**
**STELLA & DOT**
Wear the pearl side of these two-way ear-rings in front for days when you're feeling girlie; reverse for outfits that need a little edge.
**TO BUY:** $39, stelladot.com.

**4**
**ASOS**
A literal twist on a classic ring.
**TO BUY:** $9, asos.com.

**5**
**FRENCH CONNECTION**
Tiny pearls add to the delicate charm of this bar necklace.
**TO BUY:** $38, macys.com.




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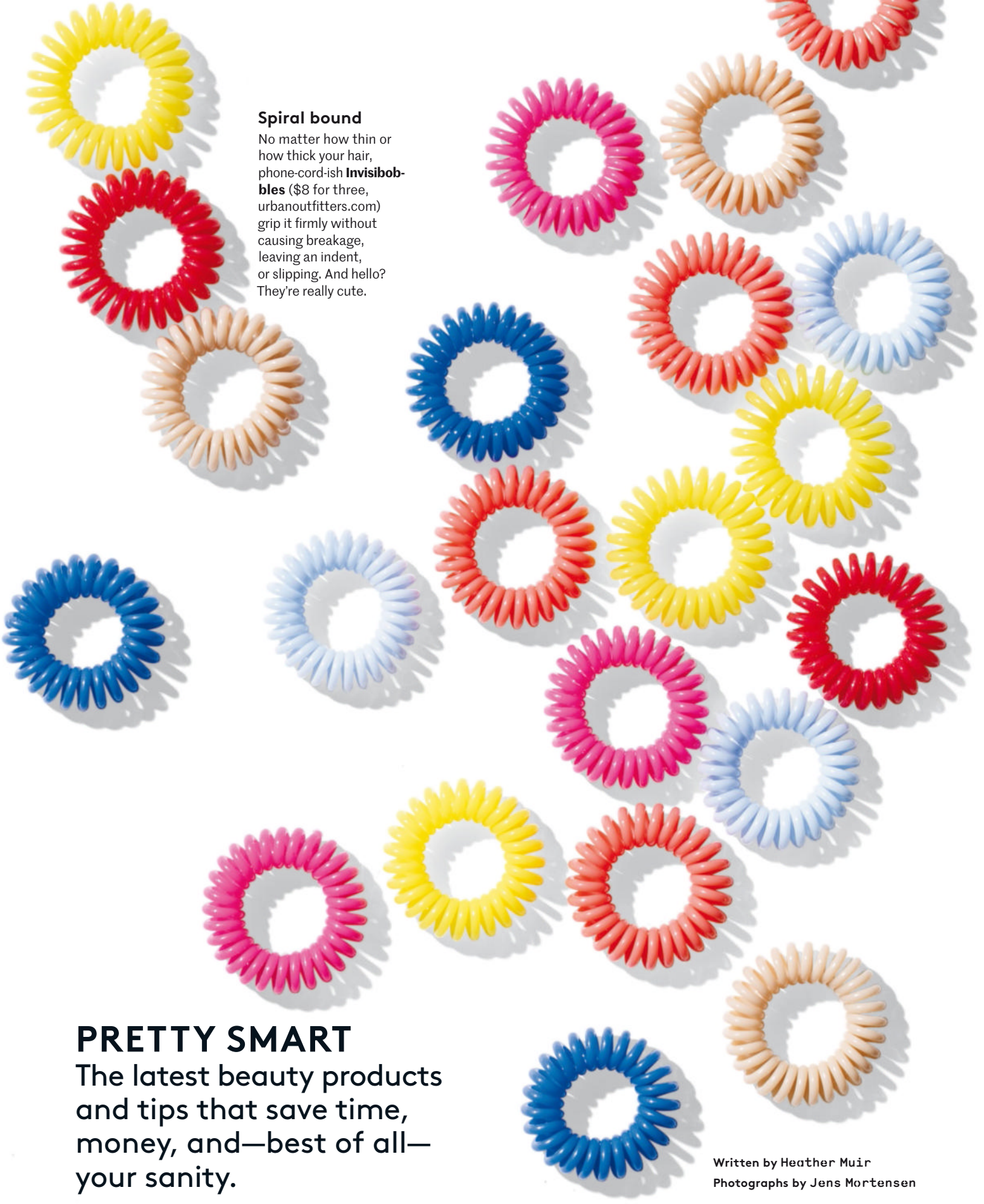

### Spiral bound

No matter how thin or how thick your hair, phone-cord-ish **Invisibobbles** ($8 for three, urbanoutfitters.com) grip it firmly without causing breakage, leaving an indent, or slipping. And hello? They're really cute.

# PRETTY SMART

## The latest beauty products and tips that save time, money, and—best of all—your sanity.

Written by Heather Muir
Photographs by Jens Mortensen

### Need a lift?

Pat **Estée Lauder Dimension Expert Liquid Tape** ($70, estee lauder.com) on saggy spots around your eyes and mouth. Polymers temporarily tighten skin for a well-rested look.

### Head start

Massage a dab of **R+Co Badlands Dry Shampoo Paste** ($28, neiman marcus.com) into your roots. Powders sop up oil and impart a beachy texture to revive dirty hair fast.

### Painter's tape

Before polishing your nails, trace your cuticles with **Liquid Palisade by Kiesque** ($22, kiesque.com). Once dry, it forms a barrier that peels off post-mani, revealing the work of a steady hand.

### And to cap it off...

Everything you need for an at-home manicure is at your fingertips. **L'Oréal Paris Infallible Pro-Last Nailcolor** ($10 at drugstores) has a durable polish on one end of the wand and a pop-off tint-boosting topcoat on the other.

### TOP OF THE LINE

EACH POT OF **STILA GOT INKED CUSHION EYE LINERS** ($28 EACH, STILA COSMETICS.COM) HOUSES A SPONGE SATURATED IN LIQUID LINER. APPLY IT WITH THE **LA QUILL PRECISION BRUSH** ($32, STILACOSMETICS.COM), WHICH HAS SHORT, FIRM BRISTLES TO MAKE CREATING EVEN LINES EASIER.

### Bumper sticker

**Peter Thomas Roth Acne-Clear Invisible Dots** ($30, peterthomasroth.com) deliver salicylic acid to zits without drying the skin around them. The stickers are transparent and tiny, so they don't attract attention.

PROP STYLING BY SARAH GUIDO-LAAKSO

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Pick up a friend with benefits... nutritional benefits. It's time to #GetFresh in the freezer aisle with Luvo and their wholesome, convenient meals made from fresh, nutritious ingredients. Delicious dishes that use less of the stuff so many of us want to cut back on—like sugar and sodium—and more of the things we really need, including fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Pick up oat-bran and ricotta pancakes for a filling breakfast, chicken chili verde for a family dinner, or an organic apple coconut curry burrito for an on-the-go snack. Luvo thinks you shouldn't have to sacrifice nutrition in the name of convenience. Whether you're just getting into eating well or well into a long-term commitment, this is a relationship with food you'll never regret. Learn more at **luvoinc.com**.

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## TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

TRADITIONAL CHEEK STAINS CAN LEAVE YOU RESEMBLING A CLOWN (OR THE EMBARRASSED EMOJI). **PÜR MINERALS CHEEK STAIN IN PEACH BELLINI** ($26, PURMINERALS.COM) MELTS INTO SKIN AND COMES WITH A BUILT-IN BRUSH FOR BUFFING. THE RESULT: A SUBTLE, DEWY GLOW THAT DOESN'T MIGRATE OR FADE.

### GEL-MANI UPGRADE

Getting gel polish at a salon gives you a durable, long-lasting manicure, but it also takes 15 *looong* minutes to remove. **CND Shellac Xpress5 Top Coat for gel polish** ($55, cnd.com for salons) cuts this time down to five minutes, thanks to new ingredients that allow the acetone in remover to penetrate faster. The result? An extra 10 minutes on your hands.

### Cover your bases

**Dior Fix It 2-in-1 Prime + Conceal** ($36, sephora.com) is a primer-and-concealer combo. This smooth operator disguises dark circles and redness all day without settling into fine lines.

### Spin cycle

The **Doll 10 Blendsmart Automatic Brush** ($60, qvc.com) is a splurge, but with the press of a button, it produces 190 revolutions per minute to glide on foundation fast and evenly.

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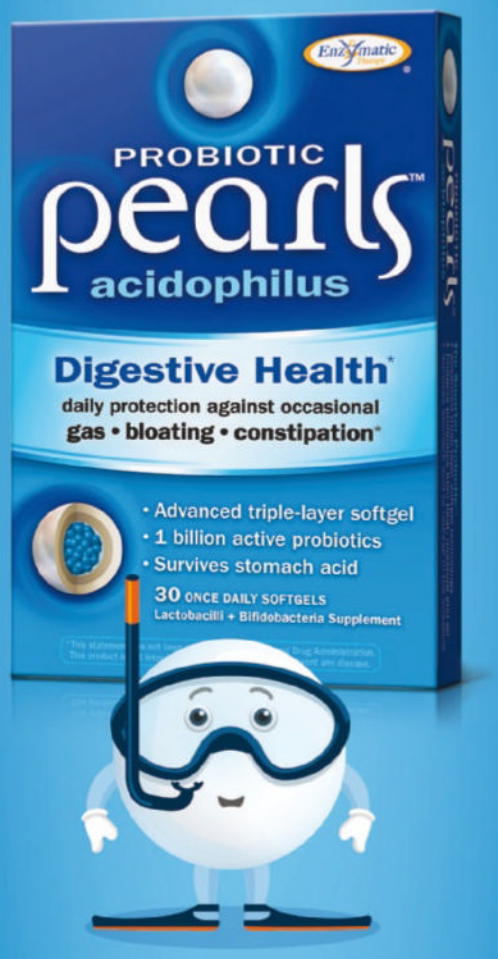


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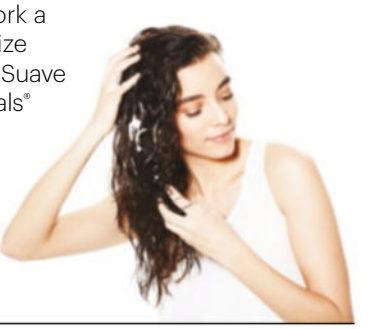
The perfect tousle without the hassle in **three easy steps**:

1

**CLEANSE & CONDITION** Nourish curls with Dove Quench Absolute Shampoo and Conditioner.

2

**STYLE** Work a golf ball–size amount of Suave Professionals® Luxe Style Infusion Curls Mousse through damp hair.



3

**FINISH** Let curls air-dry, or use a diffuser on the lowest heat setting to save time.

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Dove knows that naturally curly hair is drier and most in need of nutrient-rich care to stay nourished, strong and manageable. Introducing our most nourishing range ever, NEW Dove Quench Absolute. Infused with Buriti Oil, this rich and creamy range locks in moisture to quench thirsty hair for beautifully defined, healthy looking, touchable curls. Perfectly nourished hair + 4X more defined*, natural curls

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Ordinary cleansers may not thoroughly remove makeup and oil. Neutrogena® Makeup Remover Cleansing Towelettes are specially formulated to wipe away 99.3% of stubborn makeup and prepare your skin for deeper cleansing.

### STEP 2 – Clean Deep Into Pores
## Neutrogena® Deep Clean® Gentle Scrub

Oil and dirt trapped in pores can make skin look dull and lead to breakouts. With gentle exfoliators and Beta Hydroxy acid, Neutrogena® Deep Clean® Gentle Scrub removes 99.9% of dirt and microtoxins to reveal clear skin that glows from within.

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# FACE WASH

## No matter your complexion or predilection, these eight cleansers (chosen from over 50 tested) are clear winners.

Written by Jenny Jin

Photographs by Jens Mortensen

REALSIMPLE ROAD TEST

**1 BEST MULTITASKER**

**Simple Skincare Micellar Cleansing Water**

Formulated with tiny oil molecules to dissolve debris and vitamin-enriched water to soften skin, this French staple "is like a makeup remover and toner in one," said a tester.

**TO BUY:** $7, walgreens.com.

**2 BEST FOR COMBINATION SKIN**

**Kiehl's Calendula Deep Cleansing Foaming Face Wash**

One pump is all it takes to cover your face with a dense foam that leaves skin squeaky clean in shiny spots (like the forehead) and comfortably so in drier areas (like the cheeks).

**TO BUY:** $29, kiehls.com.

**3 BEST MAKEUP REMOVER**

**Shiseido Perfect Cleansing Oil**

"It's the fastest makeup remover I've ever tried," said a tester. Rub onto dry skin, then add water to form a silky emulsion that melts away even waterproof makeup without any tugging.

**TO BUY:** $32, shiseido.com.

**4 BEST NATURAL**

**Drunk Elephant Pekee Bar**

This palm-size bar, made with anti-inflammatory blueberry extract and hydrating honey (and without any drying detergents or dyes), left testers with "refreshed skin" and "less redness."

**TO BUY:** $28, sephora.com.

HAS A LOW PH LEVEL AND 20 PERCENT GLYCERINE, WHICH HELPS TO MAINTAIN THE SKIN'S MOISTURE BARRIER.

PROP STYLING BY SARAH GUIDO-LAAKSO

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THE NONCOMEDOGENIC, FRAGRANCE-FREE FORMULA WON'T CLOG PORES OR IRRITATE SKIN.

**5 MOST INDULGENT**

**Elemis Pro-Radiance Cream Cleanser**

This velvety salve is packed with plant extracts that pamper your skin—and your senses—with their aroma. It comes with a fluffy mitt that makes removal "feel extra fancy and spa-like."

**TO BUY:** $49, nordstrom.com.

**6 BEST FOR DRY SKIN**

**Clinique Take the Day Off Cleansing Milk**

Massage this lightweight fluid on to dissolve makeup; shea butter in the formula lays down and locks in moisture. "For once my face didn't feel tight after washing it," said a tester.

**TO BUY:** $28, clinique.com.

**7 BEST FOR OILY SKIN**

**Murad Transforming Powder**

Pour a half teaspoon of this exfoliating powder into wet hands to form a nonabrasive paste. Thanks to deep-cleaning ingredients, like salicylic acid, testers reported fewer blackheads and less shine on their skin.

**TO BUY:** $30, murad.com.

**8 BEST FOR SENSITIVE SKIN**

**Neutrogena Extra Gentle Cleanser**

"I tried it after a recent sunburn and was surprised it didn't sting," said a tester. With calming ingredients, like chamomile and vitamin E, this mild wash lifts away dirt while soothing skin.

**TO BUY:** $6.50 at drugstores.

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— Lo, Maitland, FL

*"I love it! It has **great coverage and lasts all day**."*
— Patricia, Live Oak, FL

*"It was very **smooth, easy to apply, and long-lasting**."*
— Belinda, Indianapolis, IN

*"It provided the **perfect amount of coverage** without seeming unnatural."*
— Beth, Schaumburg, IL

## 2 out of 3

REAL SIMPLE READERS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF **SUPERSTAY BETTER SKIN™ FOUNDATION***

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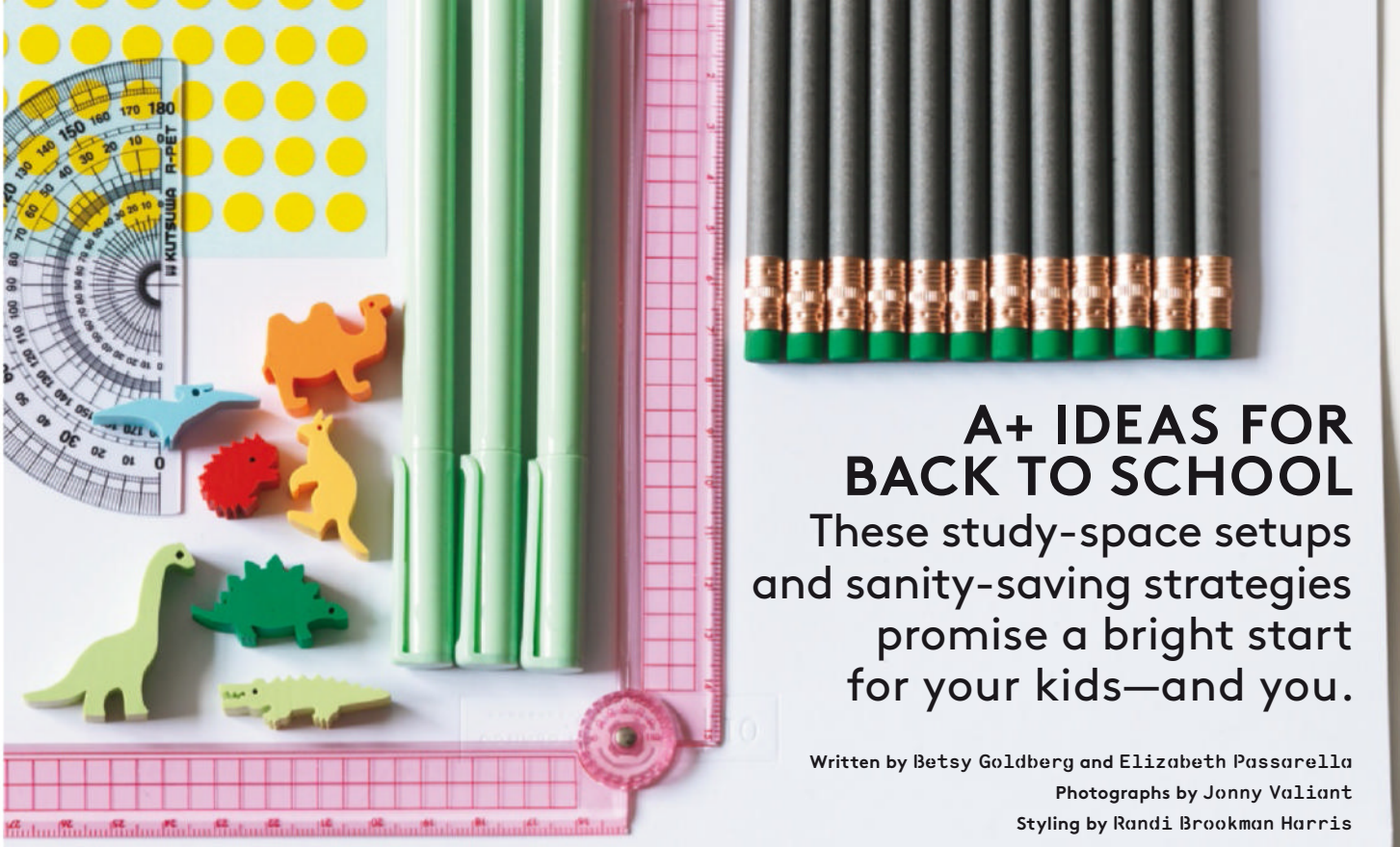

# A+ IDEAS FOR BACK TO SCHOOL

## These study-space setups and sanity-saving strategies promise a bright start for your kids—and you.

Written by Betsy Goldberg and Elizabeth Passarella
Photographs by Jonny Valiant
Styling by Randi Brookman Harris

# For little kids: a crafty corner

**Kindergartners and first graders work best in a setting that reminds them of their classroom, says Julie Morgenstern, the author of *Organizing From the Inside Out*. Divide the space into activity zones: reading, crafting, art display. Sprinkle in some punchy colors—or go bolder, with a whimsical two-tone wall—to boost energy and creativity.**

**ROTATE THE KID-LIT COLLECTION.** Books are way more enticing when kids can see the covers, so leave some out on ledges instead of tucking them all away on shelves. Change up the grouping weekly to keep read-alouds fresh.

**MAKE MATERIALS EASY TO GET AT.** If they have to lift a lid, kids are less likely to use stuff (or put it away!). Instead, store supplies in clear, open containers or drawerlike pull-out ones.

**CREATE A COZY READING AREA** With a cushy landing spot right near the books, story time can happen spontaneously. Choose a beanbag or a love seat roomy enough for two (or more) and top it with a fluffy throw.

**SET OUT A MIX OF CRAFTING TOOLS.** Peeling stickers, holding fat or skinny markers, taking tops on and off—all of these build fine motor skills in kids used to swiping electronic devices.

**TO BUY: 1. Straight & Narrow book ledge,** $25 each, landofnod.com. **2. Eames Hang-It-All rack,** $199, dwr.com. **3. Stuva bench** (used as a desk), $40, ikea.com. **4. Vintage chair,** from $35 for similar, ebay.com. **5. Ferm Living Black Lines rug,** $159 (31½ by 55 inches), cleverspaces.com. **6. Polka Dot beanbag chair,** $140, allmodern.com. **7. Rens sheepskin,** $30, ikea.com. **8. Little Bert chair by Little Nest,** $178 for two, diapers.com. For more buying info, see Credits (page 178).

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# SCHOOL-DAY TIPS FOR ALL AGES

Getting out the door on time. Remembering the permission slips. Extracting a few measly details on what they did all day. None of that is easy. Here's pro advice on mastering the new routine.

## In the morning

**ACTUALLY, BACK UP.** "Most of what we think of as a morning routine should really be a nighttime routine," says ML Nichols, the author of *The Parent Backpack.* Lay out clothes; pack lunches; make sure homework is placed in backpacks. "When puberty hits, kids' melatonin shifts—they go to bed later, and they wake up in a fog," says Nichols, who has two teenagers. "Nighttime organization becomes even more crucial." On Sunday night, take stock of the week's activities. Organize and share calendars with an app such as Cozi (cozi.com; which, like *Real Simple,* is owned by Time Inc.).

**CREATE VISUAL CLUES.** For little kids, make a poster with photos of the steps: getting up, eating breakfast, brushing teeth, putting on shoes. "And laminate a picture of your child dressed so he can see what 'ready' looks like and immediately know what he's missing," says Nichols. Big kid always forgetting her lacrosse stick? Put it in the path to the door, says productivity expert Carson Tate, "so she has to walk over it on her way out."

**EXPECT TO REPEAT YOURSELF.** No matter the age (or the cute posters), kids get distracted after you ask them to do something. "We realize the child didn't do it, we react, and things escalate," says Tina Payne Bryson, a pediatric psychotherapist and the author of *The Whole-Brain Child.* Take a deep breath. Follow up. Physical contact, such as hands on shoulders, also helps, especially for young kids.

**PUT WEIRD STUFF IN THE KITCHEN.** If a trip upstairs to brush teeth results in a detour to la-la-land, keep toothbrushes in the kitchen. "I have a client with a kitchen drawer full of hair items," says Tate. "While her girls are eating breakfast, she goes down the line and does hair."

## After school

**PREPARE FOR MELTDOWNS.** "Little ones have held it together all day and are ready to fall apart," says Bryson. Kids of all ages are often dehydrated or have low blood sugar, which equals grumpiness. Have snacks on hand.

**PLAY THE DID-OR-DIDN'T? GAME.** "How was your day? What did you *do*?" never works. Instead, Bryson recommends a version of the adult game Two Truths and a Lie. Your child offers three things she did during the day—two real, one fake—and you try to guess. "Or start telling stories about what you did in school. They love that," says Nichols. "It always prompts them to share."

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# For bigger kids: a subdued spot

**Starting in second grade, when homework often ramps up, a streamlined environment with clear, uncluttered surfaces makes it easier to buckle down and focus. Think quiet, neutral shades and unified storage sets (folders, boxes) for minimal distraction and maximum concentration.**

**PUT SUPPLIES ON A PEGBOARD.** Clever cure for desk mess: a wall-mounted organizer with adjustable, add-as-you-go pegs. Display clean, serene art—no concert posters or family photos, which "can trigger downshifting and distract from the work," says Morgenstern.

**ADD TASK LIGHTING** Even with good overhead lights, a desk lamp is key. It draws attention to the textbook or laptop and keeps it there.

**NEED A SHARED STUDY AREA FOR YOUNGER AND OLDER KIDS?** Lining a wall with one long desk and two chairs side by side may look nicer, but it's smarter to place two desks on opposite walls. Kids tend to focus better in a back-to-back setup, says Morgenstern. Have two desks on the same wall? If you can, space them at least a foot apart to create a barrier.

**STOCK ONLY ONE KIND OF PEN.** Eliminating the eenie meenie to pick out a pen (or a pencil) aids productivity. "Those types of microdecisions can cause kids to lose their train of thought," says Morgenstern.

**CREATE AN ALL-IN-ONE UNIT.** Intersect a desk with shelving for a sleek, storage-friendly workspace. Keep active tasks on top (in folders labeled by subject) and graded pieces below (archived in magazine holders).

**TO BUY: 1. Peg-it-All storage panel,** from $190, kreisdesign.com. **2. Lacquer Storage Desk Set,** $1,500 (includes bookcase), westelm.com. **3. Don Diego table lamp with bell shade,** $80, allmodern.com. **4. The Mid Century Wood Eiffel side chair,** $95, wayfair.com/RSchair. **5. Watercolor sheepskin,** $249, aelfie.com. For more buying info, see Credits (page 178).

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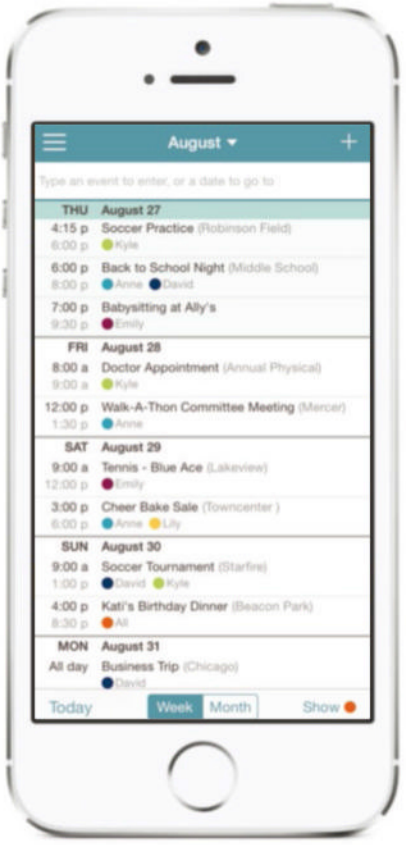
August
THU August 27
4:15 p Soccer Practice (Robinson Field)
6:00 p Kyle
6:00 p Back to School Night (Middle School)
8:00 p Anne David
7:00 p Babysitting at Ally's
9:30 p Emily
FRI August 28
8:00 a Doctor Appointment (Annual Physical)
9:00 a Kyle
12:00 p Walk-A-Thon Committee Meeting (Mercer)
1:30 p Anne
SAT August 29
9:00 a Tennis - Blue Ace (Lakeview)
12:00 p Emily
3:00 p Cheer Bake Sale (Towncenter)
6:00 p Anne Lily
SUN August 30
9:00 a Soccer Tournament (Starfire)
1:00 p David Kyle
4:00 p Kati's Birthday Dinner (Beacon Park)
8:30 p All
MON August 31
All day Business Trip (Chicago)
David
Today Week Month Show

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# HOMEWORK HELP—FOR YOU *AND* THEM

These five quick tips won't solve every problem, but they're a start.

**1. STAY POSITIVE.** No matter how irritated you are at Common Core. "Kids want to please their parents *and* teachers. If you're negative about homework, they're put in the middle, and it stresses them out," says Nichols. Rant to your friends or husband, but never in front of your child.

**2. DON'T PUSH TO "GET HOMEWORK OUT OF THE WAY."** Some kids can dive right in after school; others need to play or eat before they can settle. Try a few routines to see what works. Ellen Main, a former elementary-school teacher and a mother of two in South Pasadena, California, had her daughter practice spelling while on a pogo stick—a letter a bounce. "We've done homework in sidewalk chalk. She needed to be active after school and have time with me," says Main. "This way, she got both, and the work is finished."

Store supplies in small compartments to avoid a chaotic drawer.

**3. GET AN ANALOG CLOCK—AND DRAW ON IT.** For elementary kids who aren't whizzes with telling time (or sitting still): Use a dry-erase marker to shade a "pie piece" of time on the glass face of an analog clock. "It helps kids understand what 10 or 20 minutes looks like and how much time has passed," says Nichols.

**4. KNOW WHEN TO BREAK THE RULES.** A beautiful study space, like the ones here, may not work for every kid. "Parents need to be flexible," says Marcia Tate, an educational consultant in Atlanta and the author of *Preparing Children for Success in School and Life.* "I had one child who loved a designated spot; another wanted to be near me in the kitchen with a clipboard." As long as your child proves she can do the work well with distraction, let it go. And take fun breaks. "After every math row, I'll try to throw a raisin in your mouth!"

**5. FARM IT OUT.** If homework is a constant struggle and everyone is miserable, pay an older kid to be a homework helper. Keep your child on task and answer questions, says Bryson: "Don't let the battle consume your relationship."



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## Q.
### Attention-hog dog

**My Australian Blue Heeler mix is clingy even though we give her loads of one-on-one time and toys and walk her once a day. What's the fix?**

R. R. C., via Facebook

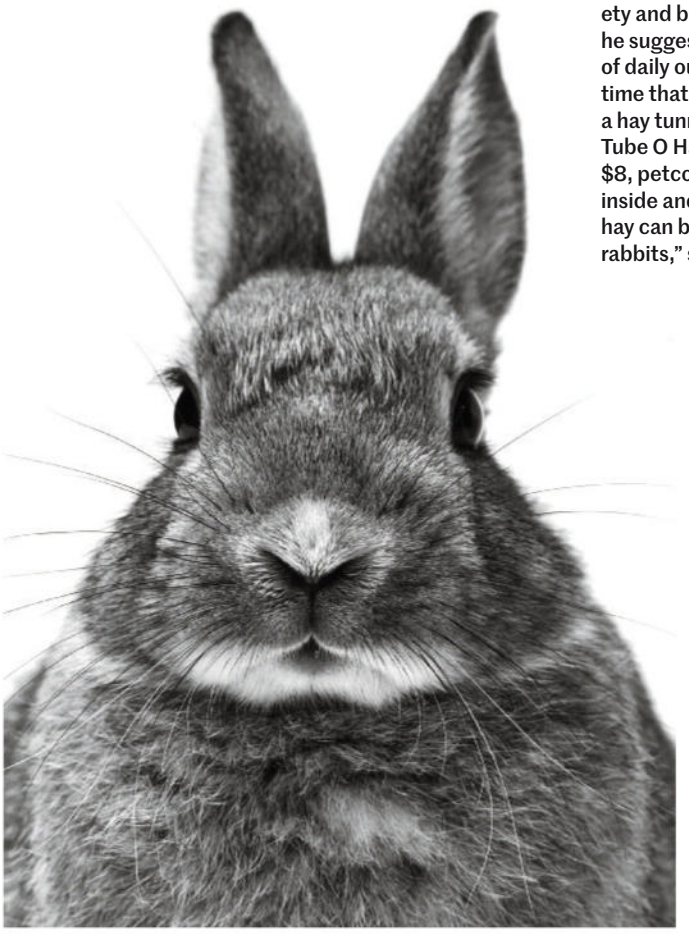
**A.** Blue Heeler pups are working dogs that are happiest with a few hours of exercise a day, says veterinarian Laura Jones, so your pooch's neediness may be a sign of excess energy. Try walking her for 30 minutes at least twice a day. Short on time? A large busy ball (Kong Biscuit Ball Dog Toy, $14.50, chewy.com) can prompt activity. "She has to roll it to get out bits of food you've put inside," says Jones. If she's getting enough exercise but still shadows you, try independence training, says veterinary behaviorist Nicholas Dodman. Three times a day, as regularly as you can, bring her to her dog bed on one side of the room, command her to stay, and sit on the opposite side for five minutes. "Give her a chew toy so she's happily doing her own thing," says Dodman. Work up to 10-minute stints. After two or three months of training, "your dog will realize that she can stand on her own four feet."

## Q.
### Bugs bunny

**My rabbit is constantly nipping herself, and I'm worried it could be fleas. How do I handle it?**

C. S. H., via Facebook

**A.** First run a flea comb through her fur, then wipe it on a paper towel and spritz with water. Look for black, pepperlike specks that dissolve into reddish pools when sprayed. (In a nutshell: Fleas bite pets, ingest their blood, then excrete it, says veterinarian Jill Elliot. So the reddish pools are, yes, flea feces.) Regardless of the paper-towel results, schedule a vet visit. If your bunny does have fleas, the doctor will prescribe medication. If not, the vet may detect a bacterial infection, an allergy, or mites (tiny parasites that can infect animals). Another possibility: It's a behavioral issue. "Some bunnies may develop it as a nervous habit, akin to nail biting in people," says Dodman. To soothe anxiety and break the habit, he suggests three hours of daily out-of-the-cage time that includes play in a hay tunnel (Kaytee Tube O Hay Plus Carrot, $8, petco.com). "Hiding inside and nibbling the hay can be calming for rabbits," says Dodman.



## Q.
### Noisy nuisance

**Our cat scratches the walls at night, which is a big sleep disruption for us. What's the best way to curb it?**

C. K. W., via Facebook

**A.** Cats are crepuscular, meaning they're most active at dusk and dawn—hours when humans prefer to be sleeping. To help end the ruckus, keep the house dark and quiet at night. In the hour before you go to sleep, tire her out by having her play with a ball or hunt for treats you've hidden in the house, says veterinarian Donna Solomon. Still clawing the walls? Reduce the noise by moving the scratching to a post placed in an out-of-the-way spot near her bed—say, in the office or the den. Choose a post with a vertical pattern (which cats prefer, says Solomon), and spray it with a pheromone product (Feliway Behavior Modifier Spray, $25, healthypets.com). Let it dry for one minute, then rub her paws on it "to mark the post as a familiar object," says Solomon. Repeat the routine daily for at least a month. If this doesn't work, bring up the issue at your next vet visit so the doctor can check for anxiety, hyperthyroidism, or other conditions that can cause restlessness and require a supplement or a medication, says Elliot.

### THE PET EXPERTS

NICHOLAS DODMAN, B.V.M.S., Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University.

JILL ELLIOT, D.V.M., NY Holistic Vet, in New York City.

LAURA JONES, D.V.M., Greylock Animal Hospital, in North Adams, Massachusetts.

DONNA SOLOMON, D.V.M., Animal Medical Center of Chicago.

Written by
Sarah Grossbart

Photograph by
Walter Schels

# Ask the Organizer

## hoarding zone

### I have a spare room full of stuff. Whenever I try to clean it out, I get frustrated and give up. Help!

K. H., via Facebook

Oftentimes an extra room becomes a catchall when it doesn't have a defined function. So set a vision for how you want to use the space. Office? Guest room? That will propel you to work through the clear-out monotony. Before you start purging, pinpoint a local shelter (and possibly a consignment shop) where you'll unload your castoffs. Then get supplies: big, sturdy contractors' trash bags and bankers' boxes (about $20 for 10, at office-supply stores). Sort everything into Keep, Toss, and Donate piles, and as you fill up a bag or a box, clear it out of the room. (Seeing the boxes dwindle is motivating.) Once you've gone through the stuff, you're next job is to deal with it all. Dispose of the Toss items, put the Donate ones in the car, and go through the Keep boxes one by one to assign each item a home in the room or in another area of the house. Vowing not to leave random objects in the room "just for now" will help it stay neat. If you do need to stash something there on occasion, attach a Post-it note with a due date and move it to its rightful spot by then.

Illustration by The Ellaphant in the Room

## receipt relief

### What's an easy (and realistic) plan for managing receipts?

K. G., via Facebook

If your filing system is too tricky or time-consuming, you won't maintain it, so I advise clients to keep theirs basic, saving tax-related receipts in manila folders labeled by year. If you have a large volume of receipts, you might prefer an expandable folder with labeled sections, such as Business Expenses and Charitable Deductions. Use separate files for any others (from purchases you may want to return, for example). Alternatively, a digital storage system with an app like Evernote can save space. You'll need to scan any paper receipts, then slot all of them into yearly "notebooks." Keep in mind that you shouldn't be holding on to receipts indefinitely. (Three to seven years is the recommended period for tax-related ones.) To keep your collection under control, give it an annual once-over to find outdated receipts that can go.

**GOT A QUESTION?** Submit it at realsimple.com/organizing.

## cosmetics fix

### I keep all my makeup in a tin bucket on my bathroom counter. What's a better option, so I don't have to dig through it all?

S. M., via Facebook

The makeup that you use daily belongs there, but the rest is better off in a secondary space, like under the sink. Sort like with like within both groupings, and keep the products visible in clear containers (Nile Corp acrylic display boxes, $21 for two, amazon.com). Tight on space? Store brushes, eyeliner pencils, and more in magnetic organizers inside the medicine-cabinet door (Magna Pods, $10 for three, containerstore.com).

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# 10 things pros wish parents knew about discipline

Good cop. Bad cop. How about *better* cop? You know your children's naughty behavior necessitates consequences, but handling punishment can be painful. *Real Simple* asked experts: If you could change anything about the way parents approach discipline, what would it be? Pay attention, young lady.

## No. 1
## LIMIT THE TIME-OUTS

Time-outs are rooted in the idea that giving attention to behavior (good or bad) reinforces it, while ignoring decreases it. "But in the past few decades, with spanking falling out of favor and parents desperate for an alternative, it's become the go-to," says Marti Erickson, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist and a cohost of the podcast Mom Enough. Time-outs are intended to give everyone a chance to step back from a difficult situation and calm down, but they are overused. "Often parents engage in a lot of lecturing beforehand or insist that the child stop crying or wiggling," which defeats the purpose of giving her a time to chill and reflect, says Erickson. A few tips for using time-outs properly: Save them for when your child is starting to be overwhelmed with emotion (for example, when she starts throwing things)—not for every minor infraction. Aim for a minute for every year of age. And frame it as a cooling-off period, not strictly as a punishment. "When the message is 'If I deem something you do as inappropriate, I have the right to isolate you,' it teaches shame," says Vicki Hoefle, the author of *Duct Tape Parenting*. Afterward, do a brief check-in: What would she do differently next time? And know your window. "Time-outs are most effective with three- to eight-year-olds," says Michele Borba, a school consultant and the author of *No More Misbehavin'*.

**Written by Ingela Ratledge**
**Illustrations by Simone Shin**

## No. 2
## MAKE THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIME

"You talked back, so the sleepover is off!" Fair enough, right? Afraid not. Arbitrary sentences will only stir up confusion and resentment. "The punishment should be related to whatever happened," says Rebecca Jackson, a neuropsychological researcher and the founder of the website GoodParentInc.com. "If the rule is that your kid calls home after school and she violates it, then taking her phone away for a period makes sense. But taking away something completely unrelated won't change the behavior." Why not, exactly? Because suffering in and of itself is not a great motivator. "Random punishments, as painful as they may be, only teach children to fear getting caught," says Jackson. "Even young kids know when things aren't fair—and then they become hurt and angry. An appropriate punishment is easier to enforce because children usually understand that they deserved it." Catch your eighth grader riding his bike without a helmet? Then he's off those wheels for a week—not banned from hanging out with his friends. Length and scope matter, too, says Jerry Weichman, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist and the author of the adolescent self-help book *How to Deal.* "If you take away all screen time for three weeks, you as a parent have just given up your leverage for the next three weeks and eliminated your ability to set steeper consequences down the line." P.S. Nixing scheduled extracurricular activities, such as drama, sports, and dance, should be off-limits. Says Weichman: "Even people in jail get time in the yard."

**Nixing scheduled extracurricular activities, like drama and sports, should be off-limits. Even people in jail get time in the yard.**

## No. 3
## LOTS OF RULES = LOTS OF RULE BREAKING

An endless slew of edicts—*Don't touch Mom's laptop! No jumping on the bed!*—only creates temptation. "When you say, 'Don't do this or else that,' kids feel compelled to test it," says Charles Fay, Ph.D., a coauthor of *Taking the Stress Out of Raising Great Kids.* Have major house rules, and explain why they exist, then hold your tongue. "You want kids to make connections without a parent always nagging or yelling," says Jackson. With little kids, take away the toy being used as a weapon without saying a word. Eventually your child will realize that A leads to B, and B isn't fun. With teenagers, choose your big-ticket items; don't pounce on every eye roll. And keep it simple. "Teens work well with bullet points: Do well in school, have a decent attitude, and come home on time and sober," says Weichman. With his own family, Fay issued this broad rule: *You may do anything you want, as long as it doesn't cause a problem for anyone in the universe.* "So our son goes to the neighbor's without telling anyone. We would say, 'What's our *one* rule? How does what you did cause a problem for us, your worried parents? I'll bet you can think of how to not cause that problem again,'" says Fay.

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### No. 4
## ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

"Discipline is thought of as something that happens after bad behavior, when really it should be the other way around," says Erickson. Parents should breed *good* behavior. The best way to do that? Follow the adage "Catch a kid being good." Offering props to Leo for doing his homework without being asked is more likely to generate a repeat performance than is bugging him about it when it doesn't happen. "Pointing out success instills confidence in kids," says Linda Sonna, Ph.D., the author of *The Everything Tween Book*. Keep props short and sweet. If you are a constant font of "Atta boy's," kids will find it annoying, and it dilutes the message, says Weichman. In addition to praise, offer kids perks when they are deserving. "As they demonstrate maturity, widen their boundaries," says Weichman. By the time they're teenagers, they'll intuitively raise their game, because there's a track record of being acknowledged and rewarded—"not necessarily with words, but with a trial run of a later curfew or more time with electronics," says Weichman.

### No. 5
## Exorcise the ghosts of parenting past

**"Many parents discipline based on how they were raised," says Borba. Which isn't necessarily bad, but it's worth examining if you are simply falling into familiar (and maybe negative) patterns. One of the most common missteps is spanking: A 2013 Harris Interactive Poll found that 67 percent of parents still use physical punishment, despite evidence that it encourages aggressive behavior in kids and contributes to depression and anxiety. "Other mistakes I see—being overly critical or too punitive with consequences—are holdouts from the past, too," says Borba. "If we want to change our style of behavior, it takes work, just like exercising and dieting."**

### No. 6
## STOP WORRYING ABOUT LOOKING BAD IN PUBLIC

"I hear parents talk all the time about feeling more anxious and pressured in public. They think others are judging them, expecting them to control and quiet their children," says family therapist Julie Wright, the founder of the Wright Mommy and Me parenting classes, in Los Angeles. The result, says Erickson: "We often cave in to avoid a scene, or we do the opposite—go overboard with a consequence because we want to look like strong parents." The next time your child decides to play pantless tag with her sister at the DMV, just corral everyone and make a beeline for a private (or semiprivate) spot. "Anywhere you feel you can handle the situation the way you would without an audience," says Wright. "That may mean scooping a flailing toddler off the floor while saying, 'I know you really want those cookies. Let's go to the car so we can talk about it and calm our bodies down.'" No escape route in sight? No worries. Stick to your guns and find solace in the fact that everyone endures his or her share of non-Instagrammable exchanges. Says Fay, "Having an upset kid doesn't make you a terrible parent."

### No. 7
## OUTSOURCE THE CONSEQUENCES (SOMETIMES)

Occasionally, defer to your trusty coparent, the universe. "Allowing natural consequences to occur is such a perfectly equitable system. Life lessons are better disciplinarians than we ever could be," says Hoefle. Your junior high schooler stays up until the wee hours playing video games, then sleeps through his alarm in the morning? "You could punish him for it—or you could let him go to school without breakfast and wearing inappropriate clothes," says Hoefle. "The problem will take care of itself." (Same goes for the sandbox: Getting bopped on the head by another toddler for grabbing his truck is part of the learning process.) You can also let your child play judge. "Even kids as young as four can be very good at coming up with logical, appropriate consequences," says Erickson.

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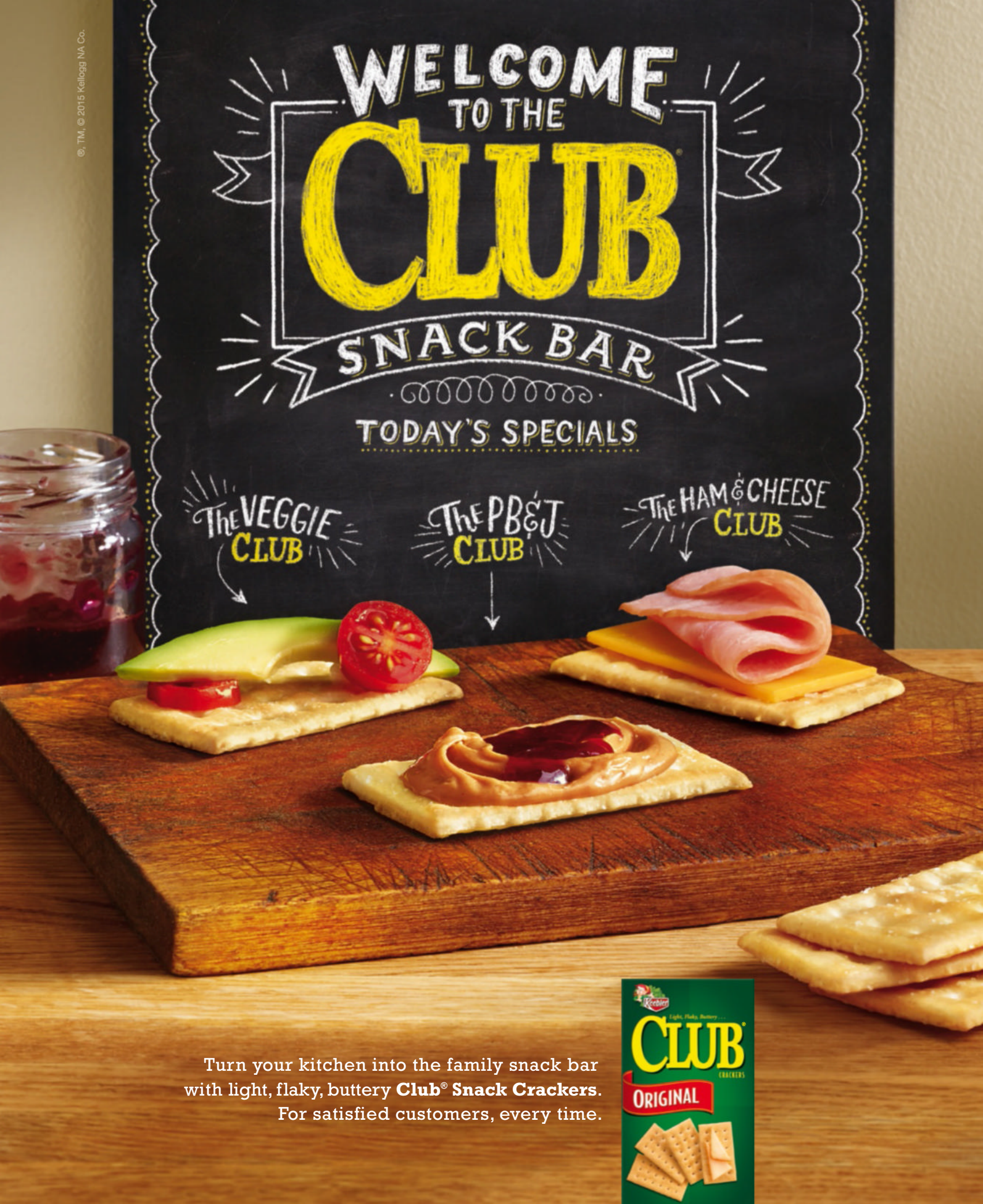

No. 8

## Resist being the "cool parent"

It's overrated. If and when your kids experiment with alcohol or drugs, ditch any romantic notions you may have about the upside of leniency. "A lot of parents won't discipline their kids for substance abuse. They say, 'We did it, and we turned out OK,' or 'They're going to do it anyway, so at least they're safe at our house,'" says Weichman. "But the truth is, early exposure to substances affects how the brain is being wired, which makes it more likely that they'll become addicted." Weichman recommends hard-line zero tolerance. For a first offense, try a week of grounding and no electronics. If it happens again, add another week. And if you're terrified that your kid will hate you, well, get over it, says Weichman. "Too many parents operate from a fear-based mind-set. Your teenager is going to pull away from you regardless, as part of healthy adolescent development," he says. "They'll move on—and eventually they'll be grateful to you for holding them accountable."

No. 9

## REMEMBER THAT IT'S NOT PERSONAL

Kids are geniuses at hitting you where it hurts. (See "keys in toilet because she doesn't want you to leave for work.") But remember: "Most behavior problems result from over- or understimulation—that's all," says Sonna. It's a little trickier with adolescents, says Frances Jensen, M.D., a professor of neurology at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of *The Teenage Brain*. "Parents tend to project full adult accountability and reasoning on teenagers," she says. But while they seem grown-up, "they do not have full connectivity to their frontal lobes, where impulse control, executive function, judgment, and empathy are located," says Jensen. It's cold comfort, but it comes in handy when you're handing down punishment. Advises Wright, "Do it in a very neutral way, like a traffic cop issuing a ticket—as if it's not personal for you, either."

No. 10

## DON'T YELL!

Simple but hard. Your kid has cried, "Mommy!" 847 times before noon, thrown a tantrum over wearing shoes, and spilled a gallon of milk on the living-room carpet. Your patience is shot. You go Hulk. The problem is that yelling—even fully justified—scares off your audience and makes the lesson moot. "Being yelled at sends children into the primitive part of their brains, where shame and anger live," says Wright. "They can't hear what's being said." Teens, in particular, will beat a hasty emotional retreat. "It's easy for them to become numb," says Weichman. If you have a sensitive kid, you need to be especially careful. "Yelling hits them to the core," says Weichman. When you start seeing red, leave the room. Allow the dust to settle, and with teenagers and younger children alike, address the infraction after you cool off. And when you do lash out and scream? Say you're sorry. "Explain that you reacted out of frustration, apologize for the tone, and tell them how you wish you had handled it," says Wright. "Repair the damage."

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# Work & Money

## THE VIEW FROM HERE

Most of us have trouble planning a week or two ahead, but Mae Jemison is busy thinking a century into the future—formulating what space travel will look like in 2112. The first African-American female astronaut, Jemison went into orbit in 1992 (see below) and has worn a mind-boggling array of impressive hats: physician, professor, business owner, nonprofit founder, and currently principal for a project called 100 Year Starship. Jemison, now 58, talked to *Real Simple* about her path to the galaxy and beyond.

**MAE JEMISON, 58**
- Former NASA astronaut, principal of 100 Year Starship
- Houston

IMAGE COURTESY OF © NASA/ROGER RESSMEYER/CORBIS

**What was your childhood like?**
I grew up on the South Side of Chicago, the third of three children. My mother was a schoolteacher, and my father always worked two or three jobs. I was a women's libber at age seven. I didn't believe in any of this foolishness about what women could and couldn't do. Growing up during the Apollo era, I always assumed I would go into space.

**Tell us about college.**
At Stanford, I majored in chemical engineering and also fulfilled the requirements for an African-American studies degree. I had been taking dance classes from the time I was eight all the way through college. When I was graduating, I had to decide either to go to New York to try to become a professional dancer or go to medical school. I talked with my mother about it. She said, "You know, you can still always dance." I decided to go to medical school.

**One of your first jobs was with the Peace Corps.**
I oversaw the Peace Corps health-care program in Liberia while I was still in medical school. I was 26. I was the youngest Peace Corps medical officer they had at the time.

**How did you go from medicine to space?**
I was a doctor working at Cigna in California in my early 30s. I would like to say that NASA

Written by
Jane Porter

found out how wonderful I was and they came and found me, but it was as mundane as calling Johnson Space Center and asking for an astronaut application and having them not laugh at you. Anybody can send in an application, so when I was actually invited down for the interview, that was exhilarating.

**Was training hard?**
It wasn't the most difficult thing I had ever done. I was very well prepared. I had already worked in West Africa for 2½ years. I had worked in Cambodian refugee camps. I had been an intern at Los Angeles County USC Medical Center. So in terms of staying up at night and being able to really push ahead, I had done that. I was very physically fit because I danced.

**Tell us about your first trip to space.**
It was beautiful. I felt like I could be a part of everything else in this universe. But the real revelation was the recognition that the earth is going to be here—and we may not. People always say, "Save the planet." Hell, we need to save *ourselves* from our own foolish behavior. We're not thinking of ourselves as part of an integrated system, and we're doing things that make the earth form an atmosphere that won't support our life form.

**What did you bring with you into space?**
I took things representing people who ordinarily may not be included. I brought a flag from the Organization of African Unity, a certificate for Chicago public-school students, a poster of Judith Jamison performing a dance by Alvin Ailey. I took up a Bundu statue from the women's society in Sierra Leone and a banner for Alpha Kappa Alpha, the oldest African-American sorority in the country.

**You didn't stay with NASA for long.**
It was an absolutely fascinating time—I learned so much. But there were many other things I had to contribute and wanted to do.

**"I don't fit in the boxes people like to put us in. Sometimes people want to stick you in one place and leave you there forever. [In my case] in that little orange flight suit."**

**Tell us about that.**
When I left NASA, I started [a technology design consulting company called] the Jemison Group. We helped develop a solar-energy system that creates electricity in the developing world. We worked on designing different medical devices. We started The Earth We Share, which developed a curriculum to keep kids engaged in science.

**You've worked in so many fields.**
I don't fit in the boxes people like to put us in. Sometimes people want to stick you in one place and leave you there—forever in that little orange flight suit with the helmet. If there's any thread that goes through my career, it's about how we create mechanisms that are going to support humans in the years to come.

**Which brings us to 100 Year Starship.**
It's part of the Dorothy Jemison Foundation for Excellence, named after my mother. Its job is to make sure capabilities exist in 100 years for interstellar flight, developing a means of pushing mankind to a neighboring star.

**Can you expand?**
For the most part, we know what we need to do to get to Mars. But if you're going to put 5,000 people, for example, aboard a world ship and send them traveling for 50 years before they get someplace, they need enough wherewithal to continue to feed themselves and live. That means we have to learn a whole lot more about food and sustainability.

**How do you even begin to tackle such massive issues?**
I put together meetings where we involve physicists and engineers, but I also always have a wildcard in there. I love to have an economist and a theologian in the room, because they're going to look at the data and information from a different perspective.

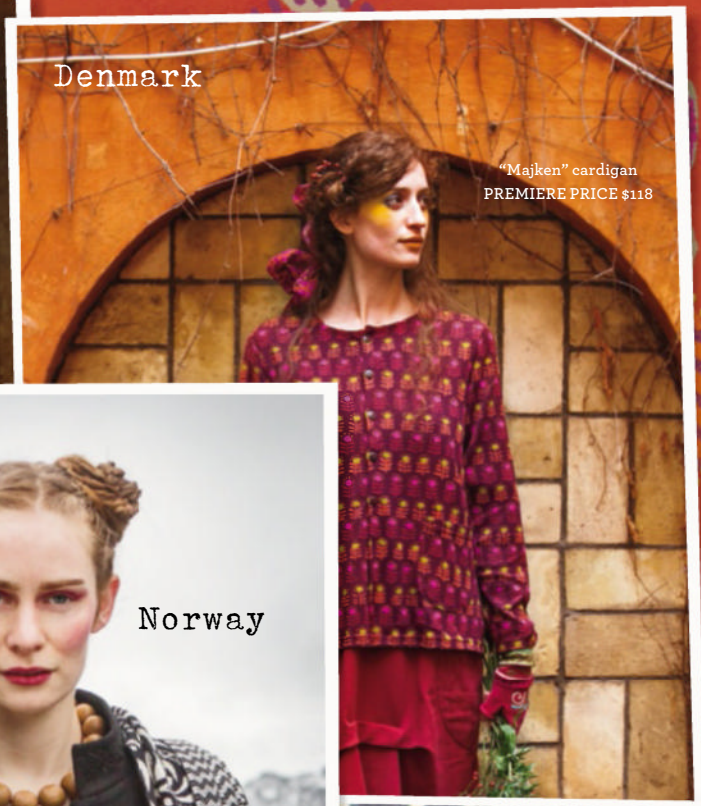
**"Taking risks doesn't mean putting people in danger. It means risking that you might do something other people won't get right away, and they may laugh at you."**

**What's a typical day like for you?**
I don't have a typical day. I definitely want more typical days.

**How much sleep do you get?**
Not enough.

**Do you have time to exercise?**
When I have a routine, it's getting up in the morning and walking, running on a treadmill, then doing weights, and in the evenings, dancing. That's what I'm trying to get back to doing.

**Can you share some thoughts on leading?**
I encourage others to take risks. But taking risks doesn't mean putting people in danger. It means risking that you might do something other people won't get right away, and they may laugh at you. Just as leadership isn't really about being in charge: It's about prodding and poking to get the best work out of people. It's about using your place at the table and not always minding your manners.



*A fall walk*
THROUGH THE
NORDIC COUNTRIES

Put on your boots and join us on an autumn walk through Swedish mushroom forests, along the fjords in Norway, across the moors in Iceland, through the beautiful Finnish birch forests and along the bustling streets of Copenhagen. Nordic nature and culture have inspired me in the fall collections.

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# Refinance your life

**When you hear "refi," you probably think "mortgage." But you can also benefit from refinancing car loans, student loans, and credit-card debt. When is it worth the bother? Here's guidance (plus shortcuts) from the pros.**

### CAR LOANS

**BASICS:** It's smart to pay off a car loan as quickly as possible because cars depreciate so rapidly.
**ACTION:** Assuming you can't kill off your debt at once, go to Bankrate.com to learn about interest rates in your area. If you suspect that you can get a lower rate than what you have, contact your bank or credit union.
**CRITICAL INFO:** There's a potential downside. Switching to a lower-rate loan often extends the term from 24 or 36 months to 72 months. So you have a lower monthly but are potentially paying more over the life of the loan. Do the math before you sign. (Most bank sites have auto-loan refinancing calculators.)

### CREDIT CARD DEBT

**BASICS:** Those "0% APR balance transfer" offers can save you a lot of money, if you're disciplined. But know this: The 0 percent typically applies only to the balance you transfer, not to new purchases. So don't shop with the card at all. Just transfer your debt and pay it off fast. After the no-interest period ends (often 15 months), your balance will be hit with the card's regular rate—which could be over 23 percent! No matter what, make payments on time or you could lose the introductory rate and owe a bundle.
**ACTION:** Go to Nerd Wallet.com to compare 0 percent offers from Chase, American Express, Discover, and others.
**CRITICAL INFO:** Some experts expect the Federal Reserve System to raise interest rates by the end of the year, so this might be a good time to consolidate credit-card debt.

### STUDENT LOANS

**BASICS:** Chances are your loans have a low interest rate, so consolidating is more about the convenience of one monthly bill than about saving money.
**ACTION:** Go to Student LoanHero.com and use the refi calculator. Then learn about options through your bank or a student-loan platform such as Common Bond.co, SoFi.com, and MeetEarnest.com.
**CRITICAL INFO:** Credit scores count. If yours is below 700, you may have a hard time refinancing.

Written by
Yelena Moroz Alpert

Illustration by
Eight Hour Day

### THE EXPERTS

ROBERT HARROW, credit-card expert at ValuePenguin.com, a financial research and analysis site.

DAVID KLEIN, CEO and cofounder of CommonBond, an online student lending platform.

BRUCE McCLARY, spokesman for the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, in Washington, D.C.

## ASK BUCKY

TIME INC.'S* ALL-KNOWING, STRAIGHT-SHOOTING VICE PRESIDENT OF STAFFING, BUCKY KEADY, TACKLES YOUR WORKPLACE CONUNDRUMS.

**How do you deal with a junior coworker who cries at the drop of a hat?**

Let it happen a couple of times to make sure it's a trend. Then, when everything's fine, talk to her. Keep the mood light. You could say, "Please take this in the spirit in which it's given—as a coaching moment. I've noticed at times you cry when the situation doesn't warrant it." Tell her she can excuse herself next time. (The phrase "I'm having a moment" could help.) And she can return once she has collected herself. If it's a peer who's quick with the waterworks, handle it with humor and help her laugh it off: "Are you kidding? This isn't worth the tears. It's not neurosurgery." (Note: If she *is* a neurosurgeon, she's on her own.)

*TIME INC. IS THE PARENT COMPANY OF *REAL SIMPLE*.

PORTRAIT BY SARAH MAYCOCK

# OPEN WIDE

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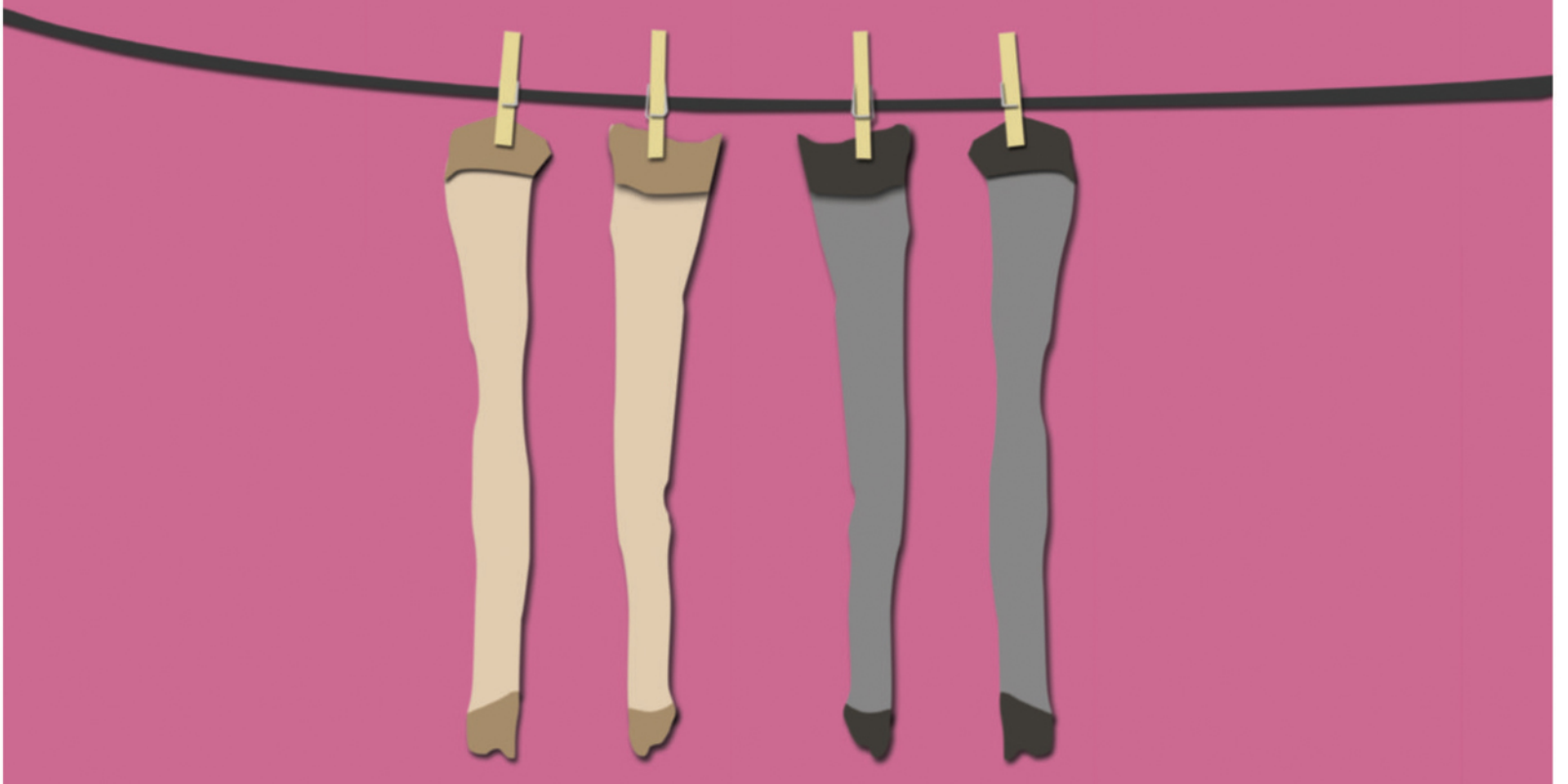

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# This is real

**09.2015**

DAVID GRAHAM, *THE POST BULLETINS PRACTICING AT GRAHAM PARK* (1988)

**RULE NO. 1**

## MIX MASCULINE WITH FEMININE

A mash-up of ladylike and tomboy elements creates a look neither too saccharine nor too tough. Try feminine silhouettes in classic menswear textiles (case in point, this coat and skirt), or go in another direction and pair traditionally masculine clothing (like wool trousers) with a delicate, wholly feminine silky top.

**TO BUY:** Massimo Dutti wool coat, $390, massimodutti.com. L.K. Bennett silk blouse, $195, lkbennett.com. XC Tang wool-blend skirt, $385, xctang.com. Monica Rich Kosann for Blue Nile locket necklace. Julie Vos ring.

**RULE NO. 2**

## STYLE AROUND YOUR SHOES

The most strategic way to create an outfit? Start from the bottom and work up. If you're going to be doing lots of running around, by all means wear flats. (The strappy style here is as chic as a pair of heels.) Then pick pieces that work with them (like a dress that hits just right, at your knee). Letting great footwear shape the colors, the prints, and the silhouettes of your ensemble, instead of adding them as an afterthought, ensures that you'll be put together top to, well, toes.

**TO BUY:** Zara faux–patent-leather flats, $60, zara.com. Orla Kiely cotton-blend dress, $377, orlakiely.com. Three Jane earrings. Zara handbag.

# THE 8 COMMANDMENTS OF FOOLPROOF STYLE

No matter the season, no matter the trends,* these timeless rules take the guesswork out of getting dressed.

*LET'S DEMONSTRATE ON THIS FALL'S BIGGEST TREND—1970S-INSPIRED LOOKS.

**Fashion Editor**
Victoria Sanchez-Lincoln

**Photographs by**
Henry Leutwyler

**RULE NO. 3**

## ADD ONE MORE ACCESSORY

Personal style is exactly that—personal. Add your own finishing touches by stacking bracelets, layering necklaces, or even reimagining how you wear a classic scarf. With all due respect to Coco Chanel, sometimes (a little) more is more.

**TO BUY:** Stella & Dot tassel necklace, $59, stelladot.com. Gerard Yosca necklace of resin and gold plate, $275, yosca.com. Henri Bendel silk scarf, $78, henribendel.com. Tory Burch gold-plated watch, $595, toryburch.com. Charlotte Olympia satin pumps, $865, charlotteolympia.com. Sportmax dress.

**RULE NO. 4**

## LET BIGGER MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER

It sounds counterintuitive, but voluminous pieces can have a minimizing effect. Slenderize hips by pairing a full skirt with a close-cut top, or shrink a large bust with a boxy blouse and slim-fit trousers. The narrower lines will look as if they continue under the puffier pieces.

**TO BUY:** Robert Rodriguez viscose-blend sweater, $79, Dillard's, 800-345-5273. Hunter Bell brocade skirt, $418, lordandtaylor.com. Isharya earrings. Mindy Mae's Market black bangle. Holst + Lee cord bracelet. Diane von Furstenberg gold-tone cuff.

**RULE NO. 5**

## USE CASUAL TO ELEVATE DRESSY

Nothing says "confident, effortless style" like combining elements from two different dress codes and pulling it off. Layered over a formal full-length silk dress (!), a chunky sweater simultaneously tones it down and modernizes it. Let your accessories dictate the vibe. The stiletto heels and the statement jewelry here keep things on the dressy side.

**TO BUY:** Loft knit turtleneck, $80, loft.com. J. Crew chiffon dress, $365, jcrew.com. H&M cord necklace, $35, hm.com. Paul Andrew shoes.

**RULE NO. 6**

## WEAR JUST ONE COLOR, BUT VARY THE TONES

Pulling together a monochromatic outfit in the morning is a no-brainer. Make it look more dynamic by mixing light and dark versions of your shade of choice. Put those variations to work for the ultimate figure flattery: The darker tones in the outfit will have a minimizing effect, while the lighter ones will draw attention.

**TO BUY:** The Limited blouse, $60, thelimited.com. Max Mara wool pants, $495, 212-879-6100. Danielle Nicole faux-leather handbag, $68, nordstrom.com. Gorjana ring.

**RULE NO. 7**

## TEMPER THE EXTREME

They're striking, to be sure. But exaggerated styles can also overwhelm (billowy bottoms) or overexpose (cropped tops). The key with these pieces is to pair them with a foil: If you're going for an abbreviated blouse, stick with an excess of fabric—like high-waisted trousers or a midi skirt—on the bottom. Likewise, to keep wide-leg pants from taking over, less fabric on top is the answer.

**TO BUY:** 7 For All Mankind calf-hair top, $395, 7forallmankind.com. Zara printed pants, $70, zara.com. Paul Andrew shoes. Lena Bernard earrings. Express cuff.

**RULE NO. 8**

## WHEN IN DOUBT, DEFINE YOUR WAIST

No matter what type of middle you're starting with, narrowing it is an instantly slimming strategy. Find a silhouette that's right for your shape, be it Empire or A-line. Or, for a universal fix, just add a belt to a capacious dress to counteract the tent effect.

**TO BUY:** White House Black Market leather stretch belt, $58, whbm.com. By Malene Birger silk dress, $595, lealboutique.com. Gerard Yosca necklace.

HAIR BY HERVE AT SARAH LAIRD AND GOOD COMPANY; MAKEUP BY HIROMI ANDO FOR BOBBI BROWN COSMETICS AT STOCKLAND MARTEL; MANICURE BY ROZA ISRAEL, BOBBI BROWN COSMETICS.

# ONE STOP SHOP

FOR BUYING INFORMATION FOR ALL THE ITEMS SHOWN ON THESE PAGES, SEE CREDITS (PAGE 178).

**PRESENTING *REAL SIMPLE*'S HOME-DECORATING BUYING GUIDE, CHOCKABLOCK WITH THE 61 BEST ONLINE RESOURCES FOR EVERY ITEM IMAGINABLE.**

Written by
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Nicole Sforza
Photographs by
Levi Brown
Illustrations by
Hannah Alice

STYLING BY RACHAEL WEINER

## BEDDING

**ABC HOME**
**abchome.com**
This revered New York City–based furnishings emporium overflows with top-of-the-line luxury linens from brands like Frette and Libeco. Don't overlook the house brand, abcDNA, which turns out plush velvet quilts and luscious organic-cotton sheets in dreamy pastels. Deal hunters: Watch for the annual winter and summer sales (in December and June into July), with discounts of up to 60 percent.

**THE COMPANY STORE**
**thecompanystore.com**
Designers like Thom Filicia load up on anything-but-basic basics here—solid sheets (in 16 colors) in silky 300-thread-count cotton at refreshingly affordable prices. With a couple of clicks, add a custom monogram for an extra $6 to $12.

**KERRY CASSILL**
**kerrycassill.com**
The online arm of this Laguna Beach, California, store is a bonanza for Kerry Cassill's Indian-inspired motifs. You'll find a gorgeous mash-up of block-print mandalas, breezy florals, and ticking stripes that work so effortlessly well together, people will think you took a master class in layering.

**SERENA & LILY**
**serenaandlily.com**
The company got its start a dozen years ago with nursery bedding, but Serena & Lily has grown up to offer everything you need to decorate your entire home. Designers such as Thomas O'Brien flock here in particular for "the nicest, most versatile bedding." There's a vast selection of classic, crisp whites and splashy-but-sophisticated embroidered patterns. (Check out the popular Gobi linens, stitched in the prettiest spectrum of seasonally updated hues.)

## BEDROOM FURNITURE

**BALLARD DESIGNS**
**ballarddesigns.com**
Well-made pieces that look like heirloom antiques (without the hefty price tags) are what you'll find here, with stately wood and metal side tables, chic leather X-benches, and ladylike linen vanity stools among the standouts. "I love the upholstered headboards—they're curvy and elegant, with details like nailheads and tufting," says designer Jessica Becker. Also notable: a supply-your-own material program. The site outlines the yardage and the specs needed for each item (like an ottoman or an armchair); you send in your fabric for a custom piece.

**OVERSTOCK**
**overstock.com**
The gems at this easy-to-search online warehouse never cease to amaze. Filter your results by price, pattern type, color, style, and more to comb through the reliably great selection of steeply discounted furniture in every style, with (bonus) free shipping over $50. The range of chests and dressers is especially stellar. Think traditional, goes-with-anything painted-wood pieces and dressier mirrored styles.

**WEST ELM**
**westelm.com**
This mecca for clean, contemporary furnishings turns out high-design, reasonably priced goods, including leather beds, lacquer nightstands, and reclaimed-wood dressers. Largely responsible for making the trendy midcentury style more mainstream, this retailer has deftly crafted pieces that strike a beautiful balance—bold enough to anchor a room yet subtle enough to seamlessly blend in. City dwellers: Behold the plethora of options for small spaces, like beds with built-in storage and nightstands with petite proportions.

## BLANKETS, QUILTS, AND THROWS

**BRAHMS MOUNT**
**brahmsmount.com**
It doesn't get any better than this for impeccable cotton, wool, and linen blankets. Woven on antique looms by artisans in Maine, they will be passed down in your family for generations. The most common patterns are classic herringbones and stripes, with the occasional twist, like an ombré wool throw. Oh, and P.S. Free shipping!

**ROBERTA ROLLER RABBIT**
**robertarollerrabbit.com**
Textile designer Roberta Freymann has a passion for travel, and that's obvious in her global-inspired line of whimsical, colorful pieces. "Her cheery Indian block-print blankets, throws, and bedding are like happy pills for your home," says designer Elaine Griffin. And free returns means no buyer's remorse.

## BOOKSHELVES AND STORAGE UNITS

**CB2**
**cb2.com**
Sized just right for small spaces, the clean-lined, well-priced offerings—many in glossy lacquer—feel fresh but aren't so ultramodern that they'll look out-of-date in a year. The wall-mount storage shelves are particularly useful for hiding eyesores, such as cords and chargers.

**IKEA**
**ikea.com**
Fact: The Swedes know storage, particularly when it comes to minimalist, modular units that are easy on the eyes. Customizable options abound (adjustable shelves, vertical or horizontal configurations with or without basket inserts)—as do the astoundingly affordable prices. It's no wonder legions of folks around the world have bought a Billy bookcase at one point or another.

**POTTERY BARN**
**potterybarn.com**
You'll telegraph a nicely grown-up vibe with PB's sturdy, substantial wall storage units. Many are made from solid hardwood, with special features, like beveled glass—a fine means of corralling bric-a-brac while helping the other pieces in a room feel pulled-together.

## CONSOLES, COFFEE TABLES, DESKS, AND SIDE TABLES

**ALLMODERN**
**allmodern.com**
True to its name, contemporary pickings are the go-to here, all easily searchable by material (wood, glass), category (computer desk, writing desk), and even width, depth, and height. "The metal Strut table by Blu Dot looks great as either a desk or a dining table, and it comes in pretty colors, like watermelon and navy," says designer Kimberly Ayres.

**CANDELABRA**
**shopcandelabra.com**
For sleek, decorator-beloved pieces in unusual materials and bold colors, you've come to the right spot. Case in point, the brightly colored grass-cloth side tables and lacquer consoles by Bungalow 5, a line favored by designer Jenny Komenda: "If I'm looking for a showstopper for the entryway, this site is always my go-to."

**ETHAN ALLEN**
**ethanallen.com**
Originally known solely for traditional furniture, this company now also offers an expanded collection that includes Bauhaus-inspired metal coffee tables and modern wood designs. Rest assured, you can still count on the same handcrafted, long-lasting quality, with 70 percent of its merchandise still made in North America.

**ZINC DOOR**
**zincdoor.com**
It's hard to imagine a more robust selection of modern-glam pieces (hundreds of coffee tables alone!). Designer Catherine Brophy is a fan, particularly of consoles like the Woodard, from Worlds Away: "It's light and only 10 inches deep, so it works well in a hallway with a pair of lamps on it and art above, or behind a sofa in a tight space."

**E-BOUTIQUES WITH BENEFITS**
Some stores in this source book offer unexpected extras.

**ALLMODERN.COM**
Get "rewards dollars" equal to 3 percent of whatever you buy to apply to your next order.

**IKEA**
Save time by having a pro put the pieces together. The "assembly with delivery" service starts at $89.

**WESTELM.COM**
Need help hanging a gallery wall or mounting a TV? West Elm will do it for you for a nominal fee ($129). Styling advice is gratis.

## CURTAINS AND DRAPES

**LOOM DECOR**
**loomdecor.com**
Ordering custom window treatments has never been simpler. This site offers 400+ affordable fabrics to choose from (in florals, houndstooth prints, trellis patterns, and more) and has stylists on hand to web-chat with you to get a sense of your space and whittle down options. "I use the site a lot," says Komenda. "I love the quality of their craftsmanship, and they work fast on custom orders. Usually they'll get them out in a week or two."

**RESTORATION HARDWARE**
**restorationhardware.com**
Head here for luxurious, beautifully textured fabrics, like Belgian linens, velvets, and Thai silks in a tastefully muted gradation of colors (mainly whites, creams, and grays). "When it comes to ready-made window treatments, these look as close to custom as they come," says Nina Freudenberger. The rod collection, too, is unparalleled, made of metals in a spectrum of varied shades with gorgeous finial options.

**THE SHADE STORE**
**theshadestore.com**
Whether it's wooden blinds, solar shades, or velvet curtains you're after, this site has everything, and it's all handcrafted Stateside. "All the styles feel modern yet timeless," says Christiane Lemieux, the founder of the home-furnishings retailer DwellStudio and the executive creative director at Wayfair. "I used the Shade Store's cream linen sheers in my own bedroom to give the windows a pretty, polished look." Swatches are on the house, as is shipping. And for non-DIYers, the company offers measuring and installation services.

## DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES

**FURBISH STUDIO**
**furbishstudio.com**
Founded by Jamie Meares, the force behind the bon vivant lifestyle blog I Suwannee, this Raleigh, North Carolina, shop teems with wildly chic accessories. "It's the perfect place to look for tchotchkes that aren't tacky, like a bone-inlay mirror, a hand-painted glazed vase, or a pair of ceramic Foo dogs to use as bookends or on a mantel," says Komenda.

**JOHN DERIAN**
**johnderian.com**
His whimsically old-fashioned decoupage plates, coasters, and paperweights created a buzz when they first came onto the scene, in 1989. Now designer John Derian has expanded his circle to include eclectic pieces, like hand-blown glass ornaments and framed prints by artist Hugo Guinness.

**JONATHAN ADLER**
**jonathanadler.com**
With a focus on fun, fanciful objects to spark a happy home, this style-centric site—from a charismatic designer who got his start as a potter at age 12—is chock-full of vases, canisters, decanters, and more. Want a brass horse pencil sharpener? Ceramic whale bookends? You'll find them here, along with plenty of posh-looking classic picks, like brass boxes and enamel picture frames.

**KELLY WEARSTLER**
**kellywearstler.com**
Sexy, edgy, rock star–worthy accessories await here, including chunky marble vases and lip-motif baby alpaca throws. "It's one of my top sources for chic, modern accessories—the perfect blend of searingly hip and functional," says Lemieux. "Her jewel-like accents, like stone boxes and bronze hand sculptures, are scattered throughout my house."

## DINING TABLES AND CHAIRS

**COST PLUS WORLD MARKET**
**worldmarket.com**
For a dining room that's elegant but unfussy, browse this affordable emporium, which offers sturdy, reliable standards with a stylish spin. You'll find wood-top tables with a trestle base or hairpin legs, classic tub chairs in sleek metal, and upholstered seats in a panoply of unexpected shades (like topaz, peacock blue, and fuchsia). Keep an eye on the home page for promo codes to apply discounts or land free shipping.

**DESIGN WITHIN REACH**
**dwr.com**
Don't miss this e-tailer's museum-worthy collection of high-end contemporary pieces that lend instant clout, including groovy Saarinen tables and iconic metal Tolix Marais stools. "Classic Eames chairs in fun colors always brighten up a kitchen or less formal dining space, and this site offers 14 hues," says feng shui expert Catherine Brophy.

**WAYFAIR**
**wayfair.com**
Turn here for a mind boggling array of styles (seriously—the site has 7 million items from more than 7,000 suppliers), all competitively priced, with free shipping over $49. The product categories, including patio pieces and bathroom fixtures, are wide ranging, but dining-room furniture is a major draw. This is *the* place to go for anything from washed-wood Parsons-style tables to Lucite chairs. Check out the *Real Simple* Shop for editor-approved furniture picks and clever decorating tricks at wayfair.com/RealSimple.

## HARDWARE, KNOBS, AND PULLS

**ANTHROPOLOGIE**
**anthropologie.com**
Think of this style setter's metal accessories as jewelry for your home: knobs made of sparkly quartz and swirly geode, sculptural brass handles, and curtain tiebacks in the form of delicately wrought golden birds. They may be just the thing to liven up a tired dresser, bring glamour to a bathroom vanity, or turn a window into a work of art.

**HOUSE OF ANTIQUE HARDWARE**
**houseofantiquehardware.com**
Reproduction and original hardware from the Colonial through the midcentury eras abounds here, and the company's customer service is legendary. "I can always find unique knobs and pulls, including beautiful reproductions," says designer Kishani Perera. That's because the shop's suppliers create period-correct and even custom hardware for any doorknob.

**LA HARDWARE**
**lahardware.com**
Long a favorite of decorators in search of on-trend pulls and knobs that won't break the bank, Liz's Antique Hardware sells all styles of vintage and reproduction door, window, and furniture hardware, covering the years 1860 to 1970. Try the five-inch-wide solid-brass rings, which brilliantly transform a thrifted credenza into a midcentury masterpiece.

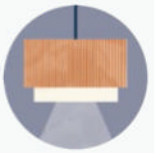
**REJUVENATION**
**rejuvenation.com**
Concrete cabinet knobs, copper bin pulls, and starburst doorbells are among the ample offerings at this adored lighting and house-parts store. Hit the "restored antiques" section to find pristine treasures from bygone eras.

## KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

**BED BATH AND BEYOND**
**bedbathandbeyond.com**
The e-commerce extension of the mega-chain makes it quick and easy to shop for everyday-useful items from Oxo, SimpleHuman, and, yes, *Real Simple*. You'll also find all the gear you need to keep your kitchen tools contained: drawer and cabinet organizers, kitchen carts, and more. Shipping fees are waived once you spend $49. Need it now? Use the "reserve online, pay in store" feature, which makes shopping a snap. Fill your cart and select the option online and you'll receive a "ready for pickup" e-mail alert within three business hours.

**BROADWAY PANHANDLER**
**broadwaypanhandler.com**
Browse this family-owned, New York City–based culinary emporium for giftables and essentials both fancy (copper sauté pans and casseroles) and functional (grills, griddles, gadgets). After nearly 40 years in the business, Broadway Panhandler has it all, including cast-iron Le Creuset fondue sets and walnut Peugeot pepper mills.

**BROOK FARM GENERAL STORE**
**www.brookfarmgeneralstore.com**
Husband-and-wife team Philippa Content and Christopher Winterbourne designed their site with the same artful simplicity as the modest, wholesome wares they sell. Picture practical-yet-elegant enamel coffeepots and colanders, wooden dishwashing brushes, and porcelain measuring spoons. Browse the "under $50" section for glazed pitchers, ceramic crocks, porcelain scoops, and other beautiful bargains.



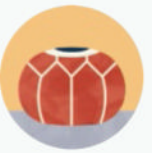
## LIGHTING

**CEDAR & MOSS**
**cedarandmoss.com**
A jackpot when it comes to graceful, impeccably crafted minimalist lighting (all handmade to order) that's also impressively well priced. From slick brass-and-walnut fixtures outfitted with Edison bulbs to midcentury-style globe pendants in solid brass, nearly everything rings in well under $200.

**CIRCA LIGHTING**
**circalighting.com**
This lighting powerhouse is packed with designer offerings (Kelly Wearstler, Aerin Lauder), like brass swing-arm sconces, rustic lanterns, and polished-nickel floor lamps. "I use something from Circa in almost every project," says designer Chloe Warner. "Many of the pieces come in different sizes. I love the large Morris lantern for its huge presence. Scaled down, it makes a sweet pendant in a powder room."

**SCHOOLHOUSE ELECTRIC**
**schoolhouseelectric.com**
Nostalgia is the M.O. here, with reproduction lighting taking cues from the Roaring Twenties to the 1970s. Expect old-world craftsmanship in handblown glass shades and brass fixtures. "Whether you need a milk-glass shade for a cottage or a satellite-style chandelier for an urban loft, they always have just the right light," says designer Jon Call.

**YLIGHTING**
**ylighting.com**
If clean and contemporary is your thing, look no further for statement-making fixtures to brighten your home. "Typically, when you browse lighting sites, you have to kiss a lot of frogs before you get to the cute stuff. Not so here. Virtually every item is gorgeous," says Griffin, who favors Niche Modern's jewel-tone glass pendants.



## OTTOMANS, POUFS, AND BENCHES

**ONE KINGS LANE**
**onekingslane.com**
Circle back often for the steeply discounted, blink-and-you'll-miss-out selections of furnishings at this flash-sale stalwart. The bench selection alone includes more than 600 styles that run the gamut from classic nailhead-embellished models to sheepskin-topped pieces.

**WILLIAMS-SONOMA HOME**
**williams-sonomahome.com**
Think past cooking tools. Here you'll find an array of posh, well-made seating options in countless fabrics and colors. Ottomans have unique appeal by way of Lucite legs and zebra-motif cowhide; benches come in all styles, from Chippendale to minimal and modern.

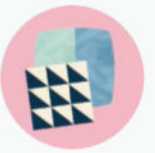
**4 APPS THAT DEMYSTIFY HOME DESIGN**

**1 LIKE THAT DECOR AND FURNITURE**
See a piece of furniture you like? Snap a photo and this app will tell you where you can buy it (along with similar options). *Free, iOS.*

**2 SNAPSHOP SHOWROOM**
"Try out" furniture by uploading a picture of your room and dragging in items from a multistore catalog (Ikea, CB2, and more). *Free, iOS.*

**3 COOLORS**
Click on a color on this app and get an array of complementary palettes. *$1, iOS, Android.*

**4 MOODBOARD**
The premier spot to house (and share) design ideas via your iPad. *$10, iOS.*



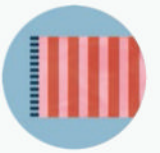
## PILLOWS

**JOHN ROBSHAW TEXTILES**
**johnrobshaw.com**
Glamour abounds when it comes to John Robshaw's striking pillows, made by artisans throughout India and Southeast Asia. The designer's hand-block prints are done in linen and cotton blends. Don't miss the ethereal ikat collection, hand-woven in Thailand.

**JUDY ROSS TEXTILES**
**judyrosstextiles.com**
New York City designer Judy Ross turns out exquisite hand-embroidered linen and wool pillows using the centuries-old chain-stitch technique. The eye-popping, graphic prints are like mini canvases for your sofa.

**LULU & GEORGIA**
**luluandgeorgia.com**
Sort by size and cushion fill, then feast your eyes on a windfall of options, including bold brushstroke prints and retro needlepoints, with many under $100.

**URBAN OUTFITTERS**
**urbanoutfitters.com**
Personality-driven pieces for the budget-minded are this seller's forte. Find lavishly patterned pillows (geometric, tie dye, zigzag) and even animal-shaped cushions—all at irresistibly low prices.



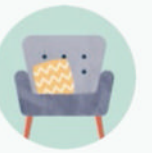
## RUGS

**AELFIE**
**aelfie.com**
The dazzling flat weaves of Brooklyn-based rug designer Aelfie Oudghiri, handwoven in India, make any space look more worldly, at down-to-earth prices (from $89 for a two-by-three-foot rug). The bold patterns feel one-of-a-kind, in happy-chic color combos like blush pink and citrus green. And should you want to tweak the palette or need a nonstandard size, they take custom orders.

**DASH & ALBERT**
**dashandalbert.com**
Practical as they are, indoor-outdoor rugs often look drab and feel plastic-y. Cut to Dash & Albert and you'll find that they are soft, virtually indestructible and come in a rainbow of patterns that instantly upgrade a room. (O'Brien swears by the stripes and plaids for entryways.) Also find a full range of wool, sisal, and cotton offerings—all well-priced and in sizes big and small.

**MADELINE WEINRIB**
**madelineweinrib.com**
Designer Madeline Weinrib rocked the rug world back in 1997, when she brought out her first collection, featuring knockout motifs in super-saturated colors. Since then, her stunning creations have been in every decorator's back pocket, with good reason. "These graphic patterns work in almost any style or room," says Freudenberger.

**SAFAVIEH HOME FURNISHINGS**
**safaviehhome.com**
Classic, tasteful floor coverings that stand the test of time (think subtle swirls and stripes) are the focus here, many of them part of designer collaborations with big names, such as Ralph Lauren and Jamie Drake. Don't miss the clearance section, where you'll find a bevy of bargains.



## SOFAS AND ACCENT CHAIRS

**JAYSON HOME**
**jaysonhome.com**
You would be hard-pressed to find a more sophisticated assortment of statement-making seating than the one at this high-end vendor. From a regal emerald green settee to handsome tufted wing backs, nearly everything can be customized with the fabric, wood finish, and cushion fill of your choosing.

**MITCHELL GOLD + BOB WILLIAMS**
**mgbwhome.com**
Each piece in this designer duo's awesomely broad upholstery assortment is carefully crafted in North Carolina, the furniture capital of the United States. "I love Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams's quality and fabric selection, from buttery-soft leathers to the silkiest velvets," says Komenda. "Their London sofa is my current obsession—it's the perfect mix of traditional and modern."

**MONARCH SOFAS**
**monarchsofas.com**
The secret is now out about this under-the-radar source specializing in fully customizable American-made sofas. Choose from hundreds of fabric options, then specify your dimensions, leg and arm styles, cushion fill, trim, and seam styles. And—are you sitting down?—prices start at $649!

## TABLETOP ACCESSORIES

**CANVAS HOME**
**canvashomestore.com**
These serene, earthy platters, plates, and pitchers in muted tones are handmade and look it (in the best way), with visible brushstrokes, subtle color variations, and organic free-form shapes.

**CRATE AND BARREL**
**crateandbarrel.com**
The ultimate all-in-one shop for everything you need to start a foundation of basic-but-not-boring kitchen and tabletop pieces. "It will forever be my favorite place to buy everyday white dinnerware," says Komenda. "You can't go wrong with their set of 8 Essential Dinner Plates."

**FISHS EDDY**
**fishseddy.com**
Classic French bistro ware intermingles with saucy serving pieces (a rabbit-shaped wooden bowl) at this New York institution. "It's one of my standbys for fun tabletop mix-ins," says Filicia. Picture a blue-dachshund creamer and mugs featuring Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

**GLOBAL TABLE**
**globaltable.com**
The online outpost of the New York City boutiques boasts a beautifully edited spread of vivid pieces from around the world. Look for cast-iron teapots from Japan, recycled-glass serving bowls from Spain, and red-and-white–striped ceramic pitchers from Vietnam.

## TOWELS

**GARNET HILL**
**garnethill.com**
It's all in the details with this 39-year-old company's signature plush, generously sized Egyptian-cotton bath linens. Available in 18 saturated colors, the terry features extra-long loops for the highest absorbancy. Craving some pattern? Choose from cheery polka dots, Greek keys, and a splashy, floral Lily Pulitzer collaboration.

**SCENTS AND FEEL**
**scentsandfeel.com**
Turkish fouta towels—those thin, fringed, fast-drying beauties that are a favorite of design pros and bloggers—are the mainstay here. Dozens of styles lay in wait, for a multitude of uses. Depending on the size, they can work as hand towels, beach blankets, dishcloths, tablecloths, or runners.

**TARGET**
**target.com**
Prepare for bathtime bliss. There's a seemingly never-ending selection of towels in every conceivable color and pattern at bargain prices. Designers across the board rave about the exclusive Nate Berkus collection, which rivals the weight and the softness of the top-end luxury brands.

## WALLPAPER

**HYGGE & WEST**
**hyggeandwest.com**
From cheery pineapples to pastel safari patterns, this site is packed with eye-catching wall coverings by young, up-and-coming designers. Are you a renter? Be sure to browse the extensive range of removable, reusable adhesive-backed wallpaper tiles.

**I LOVE WALLPAPER**
**ilovewallpaper.co.uk**
This UK site offers affordable wallpapers that pack a punch—for example, textured glitter paper and faux-wood paneling. "Shockingly, the prices, including international shipping, are still much less expensive than some that I see in the States," says Call.

**SPOONFLOWER**
**spoonflower.com**
The possibilities here are endless. If you don't find a favorite among the vast array of prints (the ikats alone number in the hundreds), you can design your own. Simply upload an image, choose your size and paper type (even temporary versions)—and voilà!—a true original.

**WALNUT WALLPAPER**
**walnutwallpaper.com**
A one-stop destination for everything from moody florals to groovy, acid-tone damasks, this Los Angeles–based shop makes browsing beyond easy: Sift by color, style, or designer. The inventory boasts goods from more than a dozen different American and European makers.

### 3 GREAT WAYS TO SAVE

**1 MAKE YOUR OWN RUG**
Local carpet shops often sell large remnants that can be cut and bound for a fraction of a pre-made rug's price.

**2 BRING YOUR OWN FABRIC**
Some dry cleaners will sew a pillow cover for you for about $20 when you supply material.

**3 NAME YOUR OWN PRICE**
A number of stores hold floor-sample sales with prices cut by up to 50 percent. Spot a flaw in a piece? You might score a deeper discount if you ask.

## INTERIOR DESIGN ON A DIME

Need professional help on a tight budget? These Web-based services offer a decorating plan and what-to-buy guidance for minimal expense.

**DECORIST.COM** With room designs from $199, the process kicks off with an interactive style quiz. Once you've turned in answers and uploaded photos of your space, along with a list of the furniture you want to keep, a designer sends two different room plans and requests feedback. The third (and final) plan gives suggested layout tweaks incorporating your feedback, plus a clickable shopping list for new pieces to add to the mix.

**HOMEPOLISH.COM** This company charges a flat fee (from $50) for an in-person design consultation—offered in major cities only—and beyond that, an hourly rate (starting at $100). Live in a smaller town? Opt for a virtual experience and save 20 percent. You can also benefit by buying suggested products on your own, rather than through a designer, which often entails markups, and by using Homepolish's vendor discounts (Design Within Reach, CB2, and many more).

**LAURELANDWOLF.COM** This virtual design firm charges a onetime fee per room (from $199 up). Start by viewing sample spaces and clicking "Love it" or "Leave it" to pinpoint your style. Then answer a few questions. (Do you have pets? Favorite furniture brands?) Next, upload pictures of the room. Designers send mood boards of ideas, and you select the one you like best and work with that designer virtually until you land on a plan. You'll get a shopping list, a layout, and how-tos to style your space.

**STYLE SMARTS**
Find more great decorating tips and product picks at realsimple.com/designadvice.

# LITTLE HOUSE IN THE BIG WOODS

What do you do when you're a reluctant city dweller craving nature? If you're ecologist Jenny Carney, you build yourself a tiny remote getaway (with a little help from Pa).

Written by Catherine Halley
Photographs by Rob Howard

**JENNY CARNEY** was almost struck by lightning once. A field ecologist, she was using a metal tank of compressed nitrogen to measure the moisture content in a tree. "It started to drizzle," she says. "Then out of nowhere, a bolt of lightning hit the tank." Fortunately, the tank didn't explode. But the simultaneous light-sound experience—"near death by natural disaster," she jokes—was a pretty exciting moment in her (outdoor) working life.

About 10 years ago, Jenny, now 37, took her scientific-inquiry skills indoors, where she felt they could make more of an impact. She runs a sustainability consulting firm in Chicago called YR&G that advises companies on all aspects of green building and energy-efficiency. It's rewarding work, for sure. But sitting in front of a computer all day made Jenny, who had grown up in rural Wisconsin and had traversed forests in her previous gig, ache for nature. It's a familiar feeling, even for those of us with urban roots and desk-centric careers.

## HATCHING A PLAN

Raised by parents who had let their kids wander free with an ethos of "benign neglect," Jenny had fond memories of slipping past barbed-wire fences to say hello to the neighbors' cows. She dreamed of a similar vibe for adulthood, but she didn't have the budget for a traditional country house.

Then she read a book that galvanized her. It was by journalist Richard Louv and titled *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Suddenly Jenny had a name for the malaise many of us feel from being cooped up too much—nature-deficit disorder—and confirmation that, as she explains it, "a compulsion toward nature is a health imperative." If she couldn't buy a place, she decided, she would build one herself. Something tiny. Did she have the construction chops? Not yet. But she was a good learner, and she had a secret weapon: her dad, Paul, who, she notes, "could build just about anything." She started combing online listings for affordable property relatively close to Chicago, in a part of her home state that she considered particularly beautiful.

## DISCOVERING XANADU

In early 2009, Jenny purchased six acres of raw land in the Driftless region of southwestern Wisconsin, near the bluffs of the Mississippi River. She taught herself the 3-D modeling software SketchUp and spent that spring designing a small structure. Jenny had never designed anything before, but the software is perfect for beginners. "I was shooting for something more like a studio," she says. In her head, she downplayed the fact that she would actually need to sleep there overnight. (The land was a good four hours from Chicago.) This "made the project seem attainable despite my lack of experience," she adds with a laugh.

**THE LIBRARY**
**Shelves are lightly stocked with poetry, nature guides, and back issues of *Mother Earth News*. Says Jenny: "Xanadu is a wonderful space for introspection, but you don't want to spend your entire time here with your nose in a book."**

**"It's very intentionally not a house—it's at best a shelter. I actually call it a shed."**

The structure that she drew and later built is not big and not fancy. Says Jenny: "It's very intentionally not a house—it's at best a shelter. I actually call it a shed. Sometimes I sleep in a tent or outside on the porch if the bugs and weather are tolerable. Sometimes I sleep inside." Jenny's friend Cayce nicknamed the retreat Xanadu, after the enchanted landscape in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan." It's an apt moniker. The area features rolling hills, small farms, and country roads dotted with Amish buggies. And at 150 square feet, the shed is all about what surrounds it. "The default state at Xanadu is to be outside in nature," says Jenny. "You have to make the active decision to go inside."

## IT'S IN THE GENES

Jenny grew up watching both her parents make things with their hands. Her mother, Jane, is an artist who teaches reupholstering (just one of her many skills) at the local tech school. Jane taught Jenny and her sister how to cane chairs, a skill that came in handy when they needed pocket money during graduate school. Jenny's father, a retired construction foreman who worked on bridges, built the family's current home and several outbuildings with help from his kids and his brothers. Jenny says, "Lots of people from Wisconsin are like this. They're industrious—they just do things."

**THE BATH**
For washing, Jenny fills the white metal basin (left, top shelf) with water from the rain barrel warmed on the stove or in the sun. (Shower, shmower.) Other bathroom needs are handled camping-style.

**THE KITCHEN**
Anything that can live on the wall does, including the French press. Proof that you *can* cope without counter space or drawers.

**THE CUPBOARDS**
Ikea shelves hold heavy pots and the bar—a.k.a. a bottle of Jack Daniel's and some bitters.

**THE MUDROOM**
Bulky shoes and bags hide up high. Below them, a set of 1962 encyclopedias (missing volume one) stand in for Wi-Fi.

**THE OFFICE**
Jenny built the narrow table using a piece of reclaimed cherrywood and hairpin legs ordered from (believe it or not) hairpinlegs.com.

## WHOLE-HOUSE TOUR

**One small room with all the essentials. Storage lockers work as pantry and closet. A woodstove keeps the place toasty, even in below-zero temps. Against the north wall (not visible) is a "sofa" (moveable storage bins with cushions on top) and a Murphy-type bed; it hangs upright and flat, then folds out to fill half the space at night. The bed sleeps two, and the sofa sleeps one. Most of life at Xanadu happens on the porch and in the green spaces beyond.**

**THE ENTRY**
Snowshoes, skillets, fly-swatter, binoculars, and a spare flannel shirt hang behind the stovepipe.

## RAISING A SHED

By most accounts, Jenny's shed went up smoothly one extended October weekend in 2009, in large part because Jenny and Paul made a great team. She's a planner; he's a figure-it-out-as-you-go-er. "I enlisted his help right away to look at my drawings and tell me whether it was going to work," she says. "But he didn't fully engage in the project until we were actually building it." Then there was no problem he could not solve.

They started by choosing a location for the structure. Jenny wanted to build deep in the woods, on a level road that followed an old farmer's fence line. Her city self sought privacy. Paul convinced her to move the site closer to the field where she would park her car, in part so they wouldn't have to lug building materials as far. (She thanked him later.) They created what's known as a floating foundation by laying a small bed of gravel for each footing and arranging 12 concrete deck blocks (they look like cinder blocks). Working hard with Jenny and Paul all weekend were Paul's brother Bob and Jenny's mom, Jane, who also kept the team well fed. At one point, a couple of friends stopped by to lend extra hands.

Says newbie-builder Jenny, "When you focus on the constituent parts, [a project like this] seems manageable: Build a floor, add some walls, top it with a roof. " And that's what they did. After the foundation was in place, they framed the floor, dropping supports of different lengths to create a level surface on the hill. Since they were building on an incline, the supports at the top of the hill are shorter than those at the bottom—and the floor appears to stick straight out of the hillside.

Next they put down plywood floor decking. Then they framed the walls, leaving room for windows, and the roof, which would be metal, to facilitate rainwater collection.

**Days at Xanadu are spent lounging on the porch and enjoying the company of friends while waiting the 20 minutes it takes for water to boil.**

After the skeleton of the shed was in place, they hung exterior walls made of plywood and added a layer of environmentally friendly siding (made of cement, sand, and wood fiber). "Fiber-cement siding," Jenny explains, "is durable and low-maintenance, yet it's far more environmentally preferred than vinyl siding. For one thing, it's inert and noncombustible, so you don't have to worry about off-gassing or the release of toxic compounds in the event of a fire." Paul and Jenny finished up by installing energy-efficient windows and a sliding-glass door that opens onto a porch, sheltered by an overhanging roof.

Three and a half days after the project began, the exterior shell was complete. Jenny's mom rewarded the team with a huge pan of lasagna made on a camp stove.

## FILLING IN THE BLANKS

The remaining construction took place in stages over the course of the following year. Jenny came back by herself to build the interior walls. She used Energy Star–qualified foam insulation between the studs and finished the inside walls and the ceiling with formaldehyde-free plywood.

That fall, Paul returned, and together they fitted the space with a woodstove and a chimney so it could be used in winter. He and Jenny also built a simple, space-saving Murphy-type bed: It's a basic platform bed whose head is attached to the wall with hinges. They added hooks to the far legs and chains to the wall so that the bed could be hinged and lifted to hang vertically, flush against the wall, when not in use. Bed linens are kept in two storage bins that, like most everything in the shed, serve a dual purpose—they're sofa seating.

## SOMETHING TO EAT, NOTHING TO DO

Jenny researched vegetables that could thrive without care. Since she's not around to water regularly, they needed to be OK with what nature provides. In raised beds in a nearby field, she grows onions, fingerling potatoes, and beans, which she leaves to dry on the vine, then harvests for dinner.

Days at Xanadu are spent lounging on the porch, blazing trails, hunting for wild morel mushrooms, and enjoying the company of friends and loved ones while waiting the 20 minutes it takes for water to boil on the woodstove.

## THE UNFINISHED PRODUCT

There's still no plumbing or electricity installed on the property, and for now Jenny prefers it this way. She collects rainwater in a barrel to wash dishes, cooks on a campfire propane grill or the woodstove, uses a solar-charged battery to power a few lights, and turns to sawdust and a bucket for a loo. As long as you're prepared to rough it, she says, staying at Xanadu feels like cushy camping.

In an effort to return the land to its original state. Jenny cultivates prairie plants, such as milkweed. (Monarch-butterfly larvae require it,

**THE LIVING ROOM**
**Jenny spends most of her time either out in the woods or here on the 7-by-16-foot porch, where she and friends sit and talk, have meals, brush their teeth (spitting organic toothpaste into the woods), and occasionally sleep. Critters sniff around this spot at night, looking for crumbs. A hummingbird feeder filled with sugar water draws entertainment. Putting up buildings is second nature to Paul. He can hardly imagine a greater pleasure than sharing this knowledge with his daughter.**

and sadly it's disappearing.) Last year, she planted heirloom apple trees, which the deer keep picking at. In a field near the garden are tree-swallow houses made by Paul from a design that Jenny found online. Birds make their home there during mating season; field mice take residence the rest of the year. Even the swallows have a second purpose, says Jenny: "They're insectivores, gobbling mosquitoes to make lounging in the field more appealing for humans."

Jenny dreams of a high-speed rail link between Chicago and Madison, Wisconsin, which would allow her to make the most of the trek. Until then, she does the four-hour drive whenever she can get away, staying as long as her schedule permits.

At the end of each visit, before she heads back to her city life, she has a ritual. She sits on the porch, drinking a beer and reading a poem.

Paul Carney understands Jenny's pull toward this rustic project. During his retirement, he figures that he spends 90 percent of his waking time outside, gardening, fishing, and working on his house. "In the summer, I just come in to eat and sleep," he reports.

Like father, like daughter. ■

# THE ART OF MAC & CHEESE

# Food

Quick Cooking (40, 158, 160, 162, 164)
Healthy Pick (158, 160, 162, 164)
Freezable (160, 164, 176)
Make Ahead (40, 158, 160, 162, 164, 176)
Big Batch (40, 162, 176)
Slow Cooker (158, 160, 162, 164)
One Pot (158, 160, 162)
Whole-Grain (40, 158, 160, 162, 164, 176)
Vegetarian (158, 160, 162, 164, 176)
Gluten-Free (40, 158, 160, 162, 164)

GET AN EDGE
**Ready to tackle *Real Simple*'s month of dinners (page 156)? You'll need sharp knives. Store them on a wall-mounted magnetic strip or in a block. (Jumbled drawers and dishwashers dull blades.)**

SAY "SQUEEZE!"
**When a recipe calls for citrus zest and juice, always zest first. Got extra juice? Freeze in ice-cube trays for up to 2 weeks.**

GRAB A BITE
**Tongs are better than a spatula for flipping small ingredients on a grill pan, like shrimp for tacos (page 162) or grilled zucchini (page 164).**

Photograph by Christopher Testani
Set Design by Jeffrey W. Miller

# YOUR NEW DINNER ROUTINE

Every fall, *Real Simple* offers you **A MONTH OF DINNERS.** This year, it's not just four weeks of meals. It's four weeks of meals that follow a pattern. *(Around here, organization equals less stress.)* Each night of the week has a theme—Taco Tuesday! Slow-cooker Thursday!—so there's one less decision to make on a busy night.

There are also week-by-week shopping lists ready to go on page 168. Tear them out, save time, and enjoy family dinner again.

Photographs by Christopher Testani

Food Styling by Maggie Ruggiero

Set Design by Jeffrey W. Miller

MEATLESS MONDAY

## Brown rice bowls with roasted vegetables and lemon-soy dressing

HANDS-ON TIME: **30 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **45 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 1½ cups brown rice
- 1 pound cremini mushrooms, halved
- 2 medium zucchini, cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 8 radishes with greens, radishes halved and greens chopped
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 5 tablespoons lemon juice
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
- ½ cup chopped toasted walnuts

**1. HEAT** oven to 425° F. Cook the rice according to the package directions.

**2. MEANWHILE,** toss the mushrooms, zucchini, and radishes with 2 tablespoons of the oil, 2 tablespoons of the lemon juice, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Roast on a baking sheet until tender and browned in spots, 20 to 25 minutes, tossing halfway through. Remove from oven and stir in the radish greens.

**3. WHISK** together the soy sauce, sesame seeds, and the remaining 3 tablespoons each of lemon juice and olive oil in a small bowl.

**4. SERVE** the roasted vegetables and walnuts over the rice, drizzled with the dressing.

TACO TUESDAY

## Steak and roasted carrot tacos with avocado

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **40 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 1 pound small carrots, cut into 2-inch lengths
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus wedges for serving
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons toasted sesame seeds
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 pound skirt steak, cut into 4 pieces
- 12 corn tortillas, warmed
- 1 avocado, sliced
- Watercress and sour cream, for serving

**1. HEAT** oven to 425° F. Toss the carrots, lemon juice, olive oil, sesame seeds, cumin, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast until tender and browned, 20 to 25 minutes, tossing halfway through.

**2. MEANWHILE,** heat a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Season the steak with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest steak registers 125° F, 3 minutes per side for medium-rare. Let rest for 5 minutes before slicing across the grain.

**3. TOP** the tortillas with the carrots, steak, and avocado, dividing evenly. Serve topped with the watercress and sour cream, with the lemon wedges alongside.

WILDCARD WEDNESDAY

## Chicken meatballs with garlic bread

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **45 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 1 pound ground chicken
- ¾ cup plain dry bread crumbs
- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan, plus more for topping
- ¼ cup chopped parsley, plus more for topping
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 24-ounce jar marinara sauce
- 2 8-inch hoagie rolls, split
- Green salad, for serving

**1. HEAT** oven to 425° F. Combine the chicken, bread crumbs, Parmesan, parsley, egg, ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper, and half the garlic in a bowl. Mix with your hands until combined. Form into 20 meatballs (about 2 tablespoons each).

**2. PLACE** the meatballs in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes. Top with the marinara sauce and bake until the sauce thickens and the meatballs cook through, 20 minutes more.

**3. MEANWHILE,** place the rolls cut-side up on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil and sprinkle with the remaining garlic. Bake until lightly toasted, 8 to 10 minutes.

**4. DIVIDE** the meatballs and sauce on the garlic bread. Sprinkle with the additional Parmesan and chopped parsley. Serve with the salad.

SLOW-COOKER THURSDAY

## Slow-cooker pork roast with beans and spinach

HANDS-ON TIME: **20 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME:
**4 HOURS, 40 MINUTES TO 8 HOURS, 40 MINUTES**
SERVES **8**

- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 tablespoon chopped thyme
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 4- to 4½-pound boneless pork shoulder roast, tied
- 2 heads garlic, cut in half crosswise
- 2 14.5-ounce cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 8-ounce bunch spinach, stemmed and roughly chopped

**1. COMBINE** the oil, thyme, red pepper, and 1 teaspoon each salt and black pepper in a small bowl. Rub the mixture all over the pork and place in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Add the garlic and ¼ cup water. Cook on low for 7 to 8 hours or on high for 4 to 5 hours.

**2. TRANSFER** the pork to a cutting board to rest for 20 minutes. Slice across the grain. Spoon the fat off the cooking liquid. Stir in the beans and spinach until the spinach wilts.

**3. SERVE** the pork with the beans, spinach, and the juices.

FRIDGE CLEAN-OUT FRIDAY

## Mexican-style noodles with fried eggs

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **25 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 12 ounces thin spaghetti, broken into small pieces
- 3½ cups chicken broth
- 1 14.5-ounce can tomato puree
- 1 14.5-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 to 2 chipotle chilies in adobo, chopped
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 4 large eggs
- Sliced radishes, watercress, and grated Parmesan, for serving

**1. MELT** 3 tablespoons of the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the spaghetti and cook, stirring, until browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the broth, tomato puree, black beans, chipotles, and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the spaghetti is tender and the sauce is thickened, about 15 minutes.

**2. MEANWHILE,** heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Crack the eggs into the pan and cook until the whites are set and the yolks are still slightly runny, 3 to 5 minutes.

**3. TOP** the noodles with the fried eggs, sliced radishes, watercress, and Parmesan.

BROWN RICE BOWLS WITH ROASTED VEGETABLES AND LEMON-SOY DRESSING PAGE 158

ROASTED CAULIFLOWER AND GRUYÈRE FRITTATA PAGE 160

# MEATLESS MONDAYS

KALE AND MUSHROOM SKILLET PIZZA PAGE 162

FALAFEL PATTIES WITH TOMATO SALAD PAGE 164

# WEEK 2

## MEATLESS MONDAY

### Roasted cauliflower and Gruyère frittata

HANDS-ON TIME: **20 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **1 HOUR**
SERVES **4**

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for the dish
- 1 small head cauliflower (about 1 pound), cut into small florets
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 6 large eggs, beaten
- 1½ cups whole milk
- 4 ounces Gruyère, grated (1 cup)
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 6 cups mixed greens (about 5 ounces)

**1. HEAT** oven to 425° F. Oil a 9-inch pie plate. Toss the cauliflower with the paprika, 2 tablespoons of the oil, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast, tossing once, until browned and just tender, 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes. Spread evenly in the pie plate.

**2. WHISK** the eggs, milk, cheese, parsley, and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Pour over the cauliflower. Bake until the top is golden and the custard is just set in the center, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes.

**3. WHISK** the vinegar, the remaining tablespoon of oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a large bowl. Add the greens and toss. Serve with the frittata.

## TACO TUESDAY

### Pork and pinto bean enchilada tacos

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **25 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- ¾ pound pork loin, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 15.5-ounce can pinto beans, rinsed
- ¾ cup green enchilada sauce
- 12 corn tortillas, warmed
- 3 ounces cotija or Feta, crumbled (½ cup)
- ¼ small red onion, sliced
- Cilantro leaves and lime wedges, for serving

**1. SEASON** the pork with the cumin and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pork and cook, turning occasionally, until golden brown and almost cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes.

**2. ADD** the beans and enchilada sauce. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pork is cooked through and the beans are hot, 4 to 6 minutes.

**3. DIVIDE** the pork and beans among the tortillas. Top with the cheese, onion, and cilantro. Serve with the lime wedges.

## WILDCARD WEDNESDAY

### Oven-fried chicken with lemony romaine salad

HANDS-ON TIME: **20 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **40 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons seafood seasoning (such as Old Bay)
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 8 chicken tenders, patted dry
- ¼ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan, plus more for serving
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest, plus 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 romaine hearts, chopped
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered if large

**1. HEAT** oven to 425° F. Place a rack on a rimmed baking sheet.

**2. WHISK** the panko, 2 tablespoons of the oil, the seafood seasoning, and ¾ teaspoon pepper in a small bowl. Dip the chicken in the buttermilk in a bowl, then coat with the panko mixture, pressing gently to help it adhere. Place the chicken on the rack and bake until cooked through, 16 to 20 minutes. Cut into pieces.

**3. MEANWHILE,** whisk the Parmesan, lemon zest and juice, the remaining 3 tablespoons of olive oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a large bowl. Add the romaine and tomatoes and toss.

**4. SERVE** the chicken over the romaine salad with additional Parmesan.

## SLOW-COOKER THURSDAY

### Slow-cooker beef and peppers over polenta

HANDS-ON TIME: **20 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **4 HOURS, 20 MINUTES TO 8 HOURS, 20 MINUTES**
SERVES **6**

- 1 14.5-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes, crushed
- 1 pound assorted bell peppers, sliced (about 3)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 pounds beef chuck, cut into 2 pieces
- 1 cup polenta
- Basil leaves, for serving

**1. COMBINE** the tomatoes (with their juices), bell peppers, onion, oregano, garlic, and ½ teaspoon each salt and black pepper in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker. Season the beef with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon black pepper; place on top of the tomato mixture. Cover and cook on low for 7 to 8 hours or on high for 4 to 5 hours.

**2. SHRED** the meat into large chunks. Spoon off any excess fat from the liquid.

**3. TWENTY** minutes before serving, cook the polenta according to the package directions. Serve the polenta topped with the beef stew and basil.

## FRIDGE CLEAN-OUT FRIDAY

### Fish sandwiches with cucumber and pepper salad

HANDS-ON TIME: **20 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **25 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 1 English cucumber, thinly sliced
- ½ red bell pepper, chopped
- ¼ small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus wedges for serving
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 4 thin 4-ounce skinless bass or cod fillets
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- Tartar sauce, toasted burger buns, and Bibb lettuce, for serving

**1. TOSS** the cucumber, bell pepper, onion, parsley, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper in a medium bowl. Let sit for about 15 minutes.

**2. MEANWHILE,** season the fish with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon black pepper. Coat with the flour.

**3. HEAT** the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the fish and cook until opaque throughout, 1 to 2 minutes per side.

**4. SPREAD** the tartar sauce on the buns; sandwich with the fish and lettuce. Serve with the salad and lemon wedges.

STEAK AND ROASTED CARROT TACOS WITH AVOCADO
PAGE 158

PORK AND PINTO BEAN ENCHILADA TACOS
PAGE 160

# TACO TUESDAYS

SHRIMP TACOS WITH GUACAMOLE CREAM AND OLIVE SALSA PAGE 162

SMOKY FLOUNDER TACOS WITH BEET AND CARROT SLAW PAGE 164

# WEEK 3

## MEATLESS MONDAY

### Kale and mushroom skillet pizza

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **40 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 1 bunch lacinato kale, stemmed and coarsely chopped (6 ounces)
- 6 ounces shiitake mushrooms, thinly sliced (3 cups)
- 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 pound whole-wheat pizza dough
- All-purpose flour, for dusting
- 1 teaspoon cornmeal
- 6 ounces fontina, grated (1½ cups)

**1. HEAT** oven to 450° F. In a 12-inch ovenproof nonstick skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil over low heat. Add the rosemary and heat until very fragrant, about 3 minutes. Pour into a small bowl; reserve the skillet.

**2. ADD** the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, the kale, mushrooms, garlic, and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper to the skillet. Cook over medium heat, stirring, until softened, 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate; wipe out the skillet.

**3. ROLL** out the dough on a lightly floured work surface to a 12-inch round. Heat the skillet until it is hot. Lightly dust the skillet with the cornmeal, then transfer the dough to the skillet. Cook over medium heat, shaking the pan occasionally, until the dough starts to set and is golden underneath, about 3 minutes.

**4. REMOVE** from heat. Top with the cheese and kale mixture. Bake until the crust is cooked through and the cheese melts, 10 to 15 minutes. Use a spoon to drizzle the rosemary oil over the pizza. Serve hot.

## TACO TUESDAY

### Shrimp tacos with guacamole cream and olive salsa

HANDS-ON TIME: **30 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **30 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 2 avocados, pitted
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice, plus wedges for serving
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- ½ cup chopped pitted green olives
- ½ white onion, chopped (1 cup)
- ½ jalapeño, seeded and finely chopped
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1½ pounds peeled and deveined large raw shrimp
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 6-inch corn tortillas, warmed

**1. SCOOP** the avocado into a blender; add 1 tablespoon of the lime juice and ½ teaspoon salt. Puree until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl.

**2. COMBINE** the remaining 2 tablespoons of lime juice, the olives, onion, jalapeño, and cilantro in a bowl.

**3. HEAT** a grill pan over high heat. In a large bowl, toss the shrimp with the oil and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Grill, turning occasionally, until opaque, 3 to 4 minutes.

**4. SPREAD** some of the guacamole cream on each tortilla. Top with the shrimp and olive salsa. Serve with lime wedges.

## WILDCARD WEDNESDAY

### Pork and apple Sloppy Joes

HANDS-ON TIME: **30 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **30 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 2 pounds ripe tomatoes (about 4)
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1½ pounds ground pork
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- 2 Granny Smith apples, cut into matchsticks
- 4 hamburger buns, split and toasted
- Crudités (such as carrot and cucumber sticks), for serving

**1. GRATE** the tomatoes on the widest side of a box grater.

**2. HEAT** the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring, until golden, about 5 minutes. Stir in the pork, 1 teaspoon salt, and ¾ teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring, until browned, 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes, Worcestershire, and brown sugar. Simmer, stirring often, until thick, about 12 minutes.

**3. SANDWICH** the Sloppy Joe mixture and apples between the buns. Serve with the crudités.

## SLOW-COOKER THURSDAY

### Milk-braised chicken with escarole salad

HANDS-ON TIME: **15 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME:
**3 HOURS, 15 MINUTES TO 6 HOURS, 15 MINUTES**
SERVES **8**

- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 head garlic, halved crosswise
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 8 whole chicken legs
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 head escarole, leaves torn
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup shaved Parmesan
- Toasted country bread and parsley, for serving

**1. COMBINE** the milk, garlic, and rosemary in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Season the chicken with ¾ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Add to the slow cooker. Cook on low for 6 hours or on high for 3 hours.

**2. TRANSFER** the chicken to a cutting board and discard the skin and bones. Shred the meat. Skim off and discard the fat and foam from the sauce. Season the sauce with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper.

**3. TOSS** the escarole with the oil, lemon juice, Parmesan, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Serve with the chicken, sauce, bread, and parsley.

## FRIDGE CLEAN-OUT FRIDAY

### Steak and tomato bulgur salad

HANDS-ON TIME: **30 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **40 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 1 cup bulgur
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 12 ounces skirt steak, thinly sliced against the grain
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and chopped
- 1 bunch lacinato kale, stems finely chopped and leaves torn (6 ounces)
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 pounds ripe tomatoes, chopped (about 4)
- ¼ cup chopped basil

**1. COOK** the bulgur according to the package directions. Drain well; transfer to a large bowl.

**2. HEAT** the oil in a large nonstick skillet over high heat. Season the steak with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until browned, 2 minutes. Add to the bulgur.

**3. ADD** the mushrooms, kale stems, and garlic to the skillet. Cook, stirring, until softened, 3 minutes. Stir in the kale leaves until wilted, 1 minute. Season with ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Add to the bulgur, along with the lemon juice, tomatoes, and basil and mix well.

CHICKEN MEATBALLS WITH GARLIC BREAD
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OVEN-FRIED CHICKEN WITH LEMONY ROMAINE SALAD
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## WILDCARD WEDNESDAYS

PORK AND APPLE SLOPPY JOES
PAGE 162

GRILLED CHICKEN MOLE WITH ZUCCHINI
PAGE 164

# WEEK 4

## MEATLESS MONDAY

### Falafel patties with tomato salad

HANDS-ON TIME: **30 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **30 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 2 15-ounce cans chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 ripe tomatoes, cored and cut into wedges
- Tzatziki, for serving (optional)
- Toasted pita bread and lemon wedges, for serving

**1. PULSE** the chickpeas. mayonnaise, cumin, and about half the garlic in a food processor until almost smooth. Pulse in 2 tablespoons of the cilantro, the onion, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Form into eight 2½-inch patties.

**2. HEAT** 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large nonstick skillet. Add the patties and cook over medium-high heat, turning once, until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Drain on paper towels.

**3. TOSS** the remaining garlic, cilantro, and olive oil with the tomatoes and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a large bowl. Serve with the patties, tzatziki, pitas, and lemon wedges.

## TACO TUESDAY

### Smoky flounder tacos with beet and carrot slaw

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **25 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 1 large beet, cut into matchsticks
- 1 large carrot, cut into matchsticks
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley, plus leaves for garnishing
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus wedges for serving
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 4 6-ounce skinless flounder fillets
- 12 6-inch flour tortillas, warmed
- Sour cream, for serving

**1. HEAT** the broiler and arrange a rack on the top shelf.

**2. TOSS** the beet, carrot, parsley, lemon juice, 1 tablespoon olive oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium bowl.

**3. STIR** the paprika, the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a small bowl. Rub over the flounder. Broil on a foil-lined baking sheet until opaque throughout, 5 to 6 minutes. Flake into chunks.

**4. DIVIDE** the fish among the tortillas and top with the slaw, sour cream, and parsley leaves. Serve with the lemon wedges.

## WILDCARD WEDNESDAY

### Grilled chicken mole with zucchini

HANDS-ON TIME: **1 HOUR**
TOTAL TIME: **1 HOUR**
SERVES **4**

- ¼ cup sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 chipotles in adobo, plus 1 tablespoon adobo sauce
- 1 15-ounce can tomato puree
- 1 medium yellow onion, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup, packed, coarsely chopped cilantro (leaves and stems)
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 4 small zucchini, cut lengthwise into 8 wedges each, then halved crosswise
- 8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 1¾ pounds)
- Cooked rice and lime wedges (optional), for serving

**1. PUREE** the sesame seeds with the cocoa powder, chipotles, adobo sauce, tomato puree, onion, cilantro, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and ½ cup water in a blender until smooth.

**2. HEAT** a large saucepan over medium-high heat and add the sauce. Cook, stirring often, until thickened, 10 minutes. Transfer 1 cup to a bowl and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

**3. HEAT** a grill pan over medium heat. Season the zucchini wedges with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Grill, turning, until charred and tender, 10 minutes.

**4. TOSS** the chicken with the chilled sauce, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper in a bowl. Grill, turning, until cooked through, 25 minutes.

**5. SERVE** the chicken and zucchini with the rice, the remaining mole sauce, and the lime wedges.

## SLOW-COOKER THURSDAY

### Lamb tagine with oranges and dates

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **5 HOURS, 25 MINUTES TO 8 HOURS, 25 MINUTES**
SERVES **6**

- 2 pounds lamb shoulder, cut into 2-inch pieces
- ¾ cup halved and pitted Medjool dates
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1½ teaspoons smoked paprika
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1½ cups couscous
- ½ cup pitted kalamata olives, halved
- Chopped, toasted almonds; cilantro leaves; and orange wedges, for serving

**1. COMBINE** the lamb, dates, coriander, paprika, garlic, orange zest and juice, 1 teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon pepper, and ¼ cup water in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Cook on low for 8 hours or on high for 5 hours.

**2. COOK** the couscous according to the package directions. Just before serving, stir the olives into the tagine. Serve the lamb with the couscous, almonds, cilantro, and orange wedges.

## FRIDGE CLEAN-OUT FRIDAY

### Penne with spicy sausage and zucchini

HANDS-ON TIME: **30 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **40 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 spicy Italian pork sausages (12 ounces)
- 2 zucchini, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 12 ounces whole-wheat penne
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons chopped almonds

**1. HEAT** 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the sausages and brown, turning, until cooked through, 20 minutes. Transfer to a plate and cut into 1-inch pieces.

**2. DRAIN** off all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the skillet. Add the zucchini and cook over high heat until browned, 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until softened, 3 minutes. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons of olive oil and the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Season with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper.

**3. MEANWHILE,** cook the penne, reserving ½ cup of the cooking water; drain. Return the penne to the pot with the sausage, zucchini, onion, cooking water, parsley, and lemon zest and juice; toss. Top with the almonds.

SLOW-COOKER PORK ROAST WITH BEANS AND SPINACH PAGE 158

SLOW-COOKER BEEF AND PEPPERS OVER POLENTA PAGE 160

# SLOW-COOKER THURSDAYS

MILK-BRAISED CHICKEN WITH ESCAROLE SALAD PAGE 162

LAMB TAGINE WITH ORANGES AND DATES PAGE 164

MEXICAN-STYLE NOODLES WITH FRIED EGGS
PAGE 158

FISH SANDWICHES WITH CUCUMBER AND PEPPER SALAD PAGE 160

# FRIDGE CLEAN-OUT FRIDAYS

STEAK AND TOMATO BULGUR SALAD
PAGE 162

PENNE WITH SPICY SAUSAGE AND ZUCCHINI
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| MADE WITH | |
|---|---|
| 6.5% | Madagascar rain water |
| 4% | Hand-blown glass |
| 89.5% | Tastes the same as tap water |

| MADE WITH | |
|---|---|
| 100% | Turkey Breast |

Sometimes life can get complicated.
Your sandwich doesn't have to be.
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It's Deli Quality Every Time. It's *Oscar Mayer.*

# SHOPPING LISTS

## WEEK 1

### PANTRY
- olive oil, ⅔ cup
- soy sauce, 1 tablespoon
- marinara sauce, 1 24-ounce jar
- tomato puree, 1 14.5-ounce can
- canned chipotles in adobo, 1 7-ounce can
- cannellini beans, 2 14.5-ounce cans
- black beans, 1 14.5-ounce can
- chicken broth, 3½ cups
- brown rice, 1½ cups
- toasted sesame seeds, 4½ teaspoons
- chopped walnuts, ½ cup
- crushed red pepper, 1 teaspoon
- ground cumin, 1 teaspoon
- corn tortillas, 12
- thin spaghetti, 12 ounces
- plain dry bread crumbs, ¾ cup

### PRODUCE
- cremini mushrooms, 1 pound
- zucchini, 2 medium
- radishes with greens, 2 bunches
- carrots, 1 pound, small
- avocado, 1
- watercress, for serving
- green salad, for serving
- parsley, 1 small bunch
- thyme, 1 small bunch
- spinach, one 8-ounce bunch
- lemons, 4
- garlic, 3 heads

### FISH + MEAT
- skirt steak, 1 pound
- boneless pork shoulder roast, 1 4- to 4½-pound
- ground chicken, 1 pound

### EGGS + DAIRY
- grated Parmesan, ⅓ cup, plus more for serving
- sour cream, for serving
- large eggs, 5
- unsalted butter, 4 tablespoons

### PREPARED
- hoagie rolls, 2 8-inch

## WEEK 2

### PANTRY
- olive oil, ¾ cup plus 3 tablespoons
- red wine vinegar, 1 tablespoon
- green enchilada sauce, ¾ cup
- whole peeled tomatoes, 1 14.5-ounce can
- pinto beans, 1 15.5-ounce can
- smoked paprika, ½ teaspoon
- ground cumin, 1 teaspoon
- dried oregano, ½ teaspoon
- seafood seasoning (such as Old Bay), 2 teaspoons
- panko bread crumbs, 1 cup
- polenta, 1 cup
- all-purpose flour, 3 tablespoons
- corn tortillas, 12
- burger buns, 4
- tartar sauce, for serving

### PRODUCE
- cauliflower, 1 small head
- mixed greens, 6 cups (5 ounces)
- romaine hearts, 2
- Bibb lettuce, for serving
- basil leaves, for serving
- chopped parsley, 1 small bunch
- cilantro leaves, for serving
- English cucumber, 1
- red and orange bell peppers, 4
- cherry tomatoes, 1 pint
- lemons, 2
- limes, 1
- medium onion, 1
- small red onion, ½
- garlic, 1 head

### FISH + MEAT
- pork loin, ¾ pound
- beef chuck, 2 pounds
- chicken tenders, 8
- skinless bass or cod, 4 thin 4-ounce fillets

### EGGS + DAIRY
- eggs, 6 large
- whole milk, 1½ cups
- buttermilk, ¼ cup
- Gruyère, 4 ounces
- cotija cheese, 3 ounces, crumbled (½ cup)
- Parmesan, ¼ cup grated, plus more for serving

## WEEK 3

### PANTRY
- olive oil, ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon
- canola oil, 2 tablespoons
- Worcestershire sauce, 2 tablespoons
- all-purpose flour, for dusting
- cornmeal, 1 teaspoon
- light brown sugar, 1 tablespoon
- bulgur, 1 cup
- corn tortillas, 8 6-inch
- hamburger buns, 4

### PRODUCE
- Granny Smith apples, 2
- tomatoes, 4 pounds
- avocados, 2
- carrots and cucumber, for serving
- jalapeño, ½
- shiitake mushrooms, 14 ounces
- lacinato kale, 2 bunches
- escarole, 1 head
- basil, 1 small bunch
- parsley, for serving
- cilantro, 1 small bunch
- rosemary, 1 small bunch
- garlic, 2 heads
- white onion, ½
- onion, ½
- lemon, 1
- limes, 2
- pitted green olives, ½ cup chopped

### FISH + MEAT
- large raw shrimp, 1½ pounds peeled and deveined
- chicken, 8 whole legs
- ground pork, 1½ pounds
- skirt steak, 12 ounces

### EGGS + DAIRY
- fontina, 6 ounces
- Parmesan, ¼ cup shaved
- whole milk, 2 cups

### PREPARED
- whole-wheat pizza dough, 1 pound
- country bread, for serving

## WEEK 4

### PANTRY
- olive oil, ¾ cup
- mayonnaise, 3 tablespoons
- ground cumin, 1 tablespoon
- smoked paprika, 4½ teaspoons
- ground coriander, 1 tablespoon
- sesame seeds, ¼ cup
- cocoa powder, 2 tablespoons
- couscous, 1½ cups
- white rice, cooked
- whole-wheat penne, 12 ounces
- flour tortillas, 12 6-inch
- pita bread, for serving
- tomato puree, 1 15-ounce can
- chickpeas, 2 15-ounce cans
- canned chipotles in adobo, 1 7-ounce can
- Medjool dates, ¾ cup
- almonds, 2 tablespoons chopped, plus more for serving

### PRODUCE
- tomatoes, 2
- large beet, 1
- zucchini, 6
- carrot, 1 large
- parsley, 1 bunch
- cilantro, 1 bunch
- garlic, 2 heads
- yellow onions, 1 small and 2 medium
- lemons, 4
- limes, 2
- oranges, 2
- pitted kalamata olives, ½ cup

### FISH + MEAT
- lamb shoulder, 2 pounds trimmed
- spicy Italian pork sausages, 4 (12 ounces)
- chicken thighs, 8 bone-in, skin on (about 1¾ pounds)
- flounder fillets, 4 6-ounce skinless

### EGGS + DAIRY
- sour cream, for serving

### PREPARED
- tzatziki, for serving

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# WHAT THE BEST MORNINGS ARE MADE OF.

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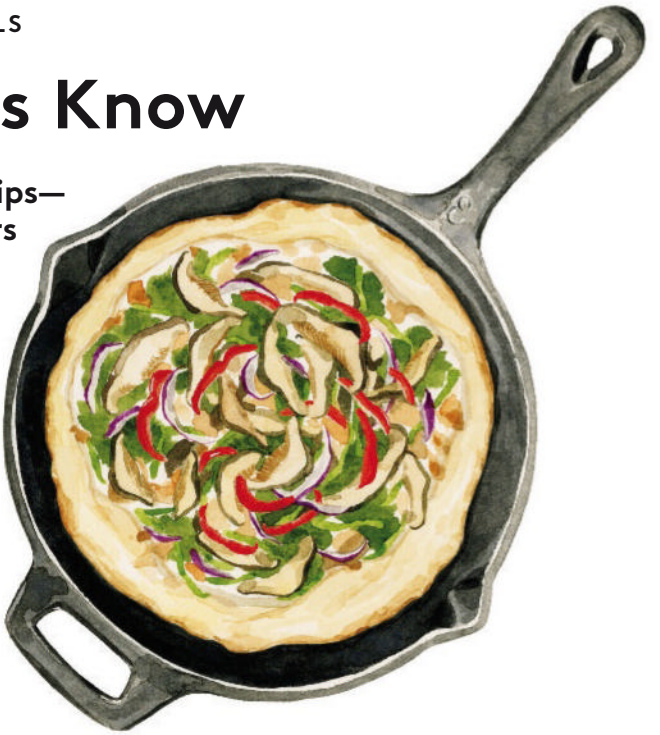
# Things Cooks Know

**Simplifying strategies, techniques, and tips—from the *Real Simple* test kitchen to yours**

## THE CASE FOR BUYING FROZEN FISH

**Nothing beats just-caught fish that's cooked and eaten the same day. But that's a tall order, matey. And frozen fish comes in a close second. In fact, much of what you find at a supermarket seafood counter is previously frozen and defrosted to sell. So for delicious fish that you can buy now and cook later, look no further than the freezer aisle. Fish sold there is often flash-frozen—sometimes right on the boat!—preserving the flavor, aroma, and texture. And it can keep for up to four months. Look for individually shrink-wrapped fillets, which are less likely to develop freezer burn. To defrost safely, refrigerate overnight or submerge the package in cold water for about 30 minutes. Then cook just as you would prepare fresh. May we suggest the cucumber-topped fish sandwiches on page 160?**

Written by
Heath Goldman
Illustrations by
Melinda Josie



## Pizza crust like the pros'

The commercial oven at your favorite pizzeria probably reaches about 700 degrees Fahrenheit—ideal for quickly crisping the bottom of the dough while keeping the edges tender. Without that kind of heat, your home oven can't, ahem, *deliver* the same results. So use this trick: Start the dough in a cast-iron skillet on the stovetop (see page 162). The concentrated heat will blast the dough and crisp the bottom without drying out the center. Then add your toppings, pop the skillet into the oven, and cook through.

## HOW TO MAKE POPCORN ON THE STOVE

Microwave bags may be the most common (and undeniably convenient) delivery method, but a pot can do the job, too. This old-school technique is easy and economical—plus, it eliminates additives. Here's how to do it.

**STEP 1:** Place 3 tablespoons canola or peanut oil (both of which have a high smoke point) and 3 (yes, just 3) kernels in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Once all 3 kernels pop, remove the pot from the heat.

**STEP 2:** Add ⅓ cup kernels—still off the heat—and wait 30 seconds to allow them to reach the same temperature so they will pop evenly. (No burned or unpopped pieces at the end!)

**STEP 3:** Set over medium heat again and cover with the lid slightly ajar to let out steam (the main culprit of soft popcorn). Gently shake occasionally until the pops slow to every 1 to 2 seconds. Immediately transfer to a large bowl and toss with fine salt to taste.

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# PACKAGED SALAD GREENS

*Real Simple* testers grazed on 54 prewashed varieties. Wondering which taste freshest and whether you *really* don't have to wash them again? Lettuce help.

Written by Heath Goldman
Photographs by Danny Kim

1 BEST DARK LEAFY MIX
**Organicgirl Supergreens**
Get the fiber and the calcium of dark leaves without the bitterness of some competitors. This mix has tender baby bok choy and Swiss chard.
**TO BUY:** $5 for a 5-ounce clamshell, at grocery stores.

2 BEST SPINACH
**Earthbound Farm Organic Baby Spinach**
Packaged spinach can be stringy and tough. Testers praised this winner's "good tenderness" and "subtle sweetness."
**TO BUY:** $4 for a 5-ounce clamshell, at grocery stores.

3 BEST ROMAINE
**Garden Life Romaine**
Ideal for topping burgers and sandwiches or chopping into a salad, these whole leaves were the crunchiest of the bunch.
**TO BUY:** $4.20 for a 7-ounce clamshell, at grocery stores.

4 BEST BABY KALE
**Taylor Farms Organic Baby Kale**
Tasters described these greens as "straight-from-a-garden" fresh. Plus, they're sturdy enough for soups and stir-fries.
**TO BUY:** $3 for a 5-ounce clamshell, at grocery stores.

5 BEST ARUGULA
**Organicgirl Baby Arugula**
Some contenders were limp and lacked arugula's peppery punch. These large, hearty furls had plenty of flavor.
**TO BUY:** $5 for a 5-ounce clamshell, at grocery stores.

6 BEST SPRING MIX
**Earthbound Farm Organic Spring Mix**
Deep green, purple, and red lettuces—some delicate, some crisp—make for a beautiful blend of balanced textures. Just add vinaigrette.
**TO BUY:** $4 for a 5-ounce clamshell, at grocery stores.

FOOD STYLING BY CLAUDIA FICCA

Smithfield Anytime FAVORITES™

HAM TACOS
W/ BLACK BEAN CORN SALSA

INGREDIENTS:
- 8 oz Smithfield Anytime Favorites™ cubed ham
- 8 soft corn tortillas
- ½ head lettuce

FOR SALSA:
- ½ can black beans, drained
- ½ can corn, drained
- ½ sweet red pepper, diced
- ½ red onion, diced
- ¼ cup cilantro or green onion, chopped
- 1 tsp chili powder
- fresh lime, juiced

STEPS:
- Stir salsa ingredients in bowl.
- Top warmed tortillas with lettuce, salsa and heated cubed ham.
- Serve!

Makes about 8 tacos

Flavor hails from Smithfield.



# TO WASH OR NOT TO WASH? AND OTHER QUESTIONS

## Is it better to buy salad greens in bags or clamshells?

The *Real Simple* food department found that greens looked, tasted, and stayed fresher in clamshells, which protect the leaves from bruising. And take heart—many companies use recycled materials.

**DO PREWASHED GREENS NEED TO BE WASHED AGAIN?**
No. Ready-to-eat or triple-washed greens are treated with food-grade sanitizers, so they are safe to eat straight from the package. In rare cases, when bacteria still remain, washing at home won't remove them anyway. *(Eek.)*

**WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO STORE GREENS?**
If they came in a clamshell, keep them in the refrigerator in the original container. If they were in a bag (and you've opened it), transfer the leaves to an airtight plastic container to prevent crushing. In both cases, you can line the containers with paper towels to absorb excess moisture.

**HOW LONG DO GREENS LAST?**
No matter how fresh they look, always discard by the expiration date, because bacteria can develop. If you spot slimy greens, it's a sure sign of bacterial rot.

**WHICH GREENS ARE THE HEALTHIEST?**
As a rule of thumb, look for red and dark green leaves. These are generally higher in antioxidants, fiber, calcium, iron, and vitamins A, $B_6$, and C than lighter-colored greens. Don't be afraid to branch out: Exotic-sounding varieties, like mâche and tatsoi, deliver a diversity of nutrients, textures, and tastes.

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# Almond jam bars

**School mornings are nuts. These protein-packed whole-grain breakfast bars are great for eating on the go, go, go.**

Recipe by Chris Morocco
Photograph by Charles Masters
Food Styling by Chris Lanier

- 1 cup rolled oats (not quick-cooking)
- ¾ cup whole-wheat flour
- 1¼ cups raw almonds
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- ⅓ cup light brown sugar
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup raspberry jam

**HEAT** oven to 350° F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with 2 crisscrossed pieces of parchment, leaving an overhang on all sides.

**PULSE** the oats, flour, and 1 cup of the almonds in a food processor until finely ground. Add the butter, sugar, baking powder, and salt; pulse to combine. Reserve ½ cup of the crumble mixture. Press the remaining mixture into the prepared pan using a straight-sided dry measuring cup or glass.

**SPREAD** the jam over the bottom crust. Coarsely chop the remaining ¼ cup of almonds. Scatter the almonds and reserved crumble mixture over the jam.

**BAKE** until golden brown and set in the middle, 35 to 45 minutes.

**LET** cool completely. Holding the paper overhang, transfer to a cutting board. Cut into 12 bars. The bars can be stored in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

HANDS-ON TIME **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME **4 HOURS (INCLUDES COOLING)**
SERVES **12**

The bars can be frozen for up to 1 month. To make them lunch box–ready, wrap them individually in plastic wrap, then place in a resealable plastic freezer bag.

SET DESIGN BY JEFFREY W. MILLER

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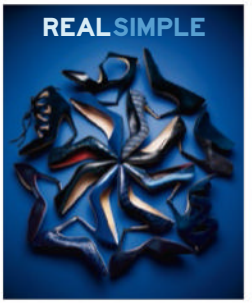
## THE BREAK*FAST* BAR




# Credits

FIND OUT WHERE TO BUY ITEMS FEATURED IN THE ISSUE

### Burgundy cover

*Clockwise from top left, inward:* Logofirstclass crocodile-embossed pumps by Stuart Weitzman, $385, 212-750-2555. Kinsley leather pumps by Calvin Klein, $139, dillards.com. Renvy by Gilt embossed-leather mule pumps, $99, gilt.com. Iiona snakeskin pumps by Etienne Aigner, $345, etienneaigner.com. Brie suede d'Orsay pumps by Rebecca Minkoff, $225, rebeccaminkoff.com. Fred suede sandals from Charles by Charles David, $129, dws.com. L.L.Bean leather-and-cashmere gloves, $69, llbean.com. & Other Stories wool scarf, $100, stories.com. Tanialy flats in suede and calf hair by Marc Fisher LTD, $145, marcfisherfootwear.com. Susans suede-and-leather flats by Marc Fisher LTD, $140, marcfisherfootwear.com. 424 Fifth suede pumps, $99, lordandtaylor.com. Malli fringed suede booties by Sigerson Morrison, $595, zapposcouture.com. Schutz pointed-toe leather pumps, $166, shop.schutz-shoes.com. Kinsley leather pumps by Calvin Klein, $139, dillards.com. Irina leather-embossed pumps by Etienne Aigner, $350, etienneaigner.com. Dawn heels by Kate Spade New York, $378, katespade.com. Knot embossed-leather heels by Charles Jourdan, $165, nordstromrack.com. Posh suede flats by French Sole, $180, frenchsoleshoes.com. Georgette flats by Dune London, $108, dunelondon.com. Peppy flats in patent leather and leather by French Sole, $180, frenchsoleshoes.com. Stella eel-skin pumps by Coye Nokes, $375, coyenokes.com. Logofirstclass crocodile-embossed pumps by Stuart Weitzman, $385, 212-750-2555. Schutz pointed-toe leather pumps, $166, shop.schutz-shoes.com. Patricia Underwood felt hat, $575, 212-268-3774. Tallis suede booties by 424 Fifth, $169, lordandtaylor.com. Louise embossed-leather clutch by Lauren Merkin, $225, Alicia The Boutique, 303-399-4597. Khloe embossed-leather satchel by Badgley Mischka, $325, lordandtaylor.com for stores. Express fringed tassel purse, $30, express.com. Henri Bendel leather-and-cashmere gloves, $138, henribendel.com. Rio fringed suede booties by Rebecca Minkoff, $275, rebeccaminkoff.com. Glade leather crossbody bag by Ecco, $220, eccousa.com. Lainey faux-leather purse by Ted Baker London, $169, tedbaker.com/us.

### Blue cover

*Clockwise from top, inward:* Kabriele cutout leather pumps by Marc Fisher, $89, marcfisherfootwear.com. Ann Taylor suede pumps, $138, anntaylor.com. Mance suede-and-leather booties by Sigerson Morrison, $450, bergdorfgoodman.com. White House Black Market cage heels in suede, $135, whbm.com. Tammy d'Orsay suede pumps by Marc Fisher LTD, $160, marcfisherfootwear.com. Babbi embossed-leather pumps by Guess, $110, macys.com. Tammy d'Orsay suede pumps by Marc Fisher LTD, $160, marcfisherfootwear.com. Bodell leather lace-up pumps by Vince Camuto, $129, vincecamuto.com. Iride Decollete leather pumps by Furla, $495, furla.com. Blanka tweed pumps by 424 Fifth, $99, lordandtaylor.com. Federica embossed-leather pumps by Louise et Cie, $129, nordstrom.com. Iiona snakeskin pumps by Etienne Aigner, $345, etienneaigner.com. Babbi embossed-leather pumps by Guess, $110, macys.com. Carra leather pumps by Ivanka Trump, $135, zappos.com. Lottie leather pumps by L.K.Bennett, $345, lkbennett.com. Kraft embossed-leather pumps by Charles Jourdan, $175, nordstromrack.com.

### Green cover

*Clockwise from top left, inward:* Claude suede-and-leather bag by Clare V, $465, clarev.com. Mesi leather satchel by Charles Jourdan, $399, amazon.com. Alice leather handbag by Furla, $798, furla.com. Mali leather crossbody bag by Charles Jourdan, $299, amazon.com. Sunday faux-leather bag by Angela Roi, $150, angelaroi.com. Haylie leather and pony-hair handbag by Ted Baker London, $425, tedbaker.com/us. Merona for Target faux-leather crossbody bag, $27, target.com. Zara faux-leather saddlebag, $50, zara.com. Turnberry Pancake leather crossbody bag by Ivanka Trump Handbags, $250, zappos.com. Large Calisch leather crossbody bag by Auxiliary for Aritzia, $298, aritzia.com.

### A+ Ideas for Back to School

**Page 103:** Mint Signature ballpoint pens, $12 for 12, poppin.com. **Page 104:** Fiona Walker felt poodle head, $155, shopwaiting onmartha.com. Happle container, $18; pencil cup, $6: container store.com. PP file box A4 in white, $7; acrylic case for glasses and small items, $30: muji.us. Colored pencil tree, $38, poketo.com. **Page 106:** Skinny strip-magnet board, $10, threebythree.com. **Page 108:** Calendar pad, $26, theorganizingstore.com. Russell + Hazel acrylic collator, $34, seejanework.com. Large lacquered rectangular box in white, $20; medium lacquered rectangular box in white, $15; Edison pencil cup in yellow, $5; acrylic tape dispenser, $10: containerstore.com. Chalkboard globe, $36 (small), anthropologie.com. Love-at-First-Sight stapler in yellow, $14, poppin.com. Stackable acrylic case 1-drawer, $13, muji.com. *Painted Pebbles 1,* by Garima Dhawan, $39 (11 by 14 inches), artfullywalls.com. *Insects and Myriapods at the American Museum of Natural History,* by Jason Polan, $60 (14 by 11 inches), 20x200.com. **Page 111:** Love-at-First-Sight stapler in mint, $14, poppin.com. PP makeup box 1Ž4–vertical half, $2.50; PP makeup box 1Ž4–horizontal half, $3.50; PP makeup box 1Ž4–horizontal half with partition, $4.50; PP makeup tray, $2.50: muji.com.

### One-Stop Shop

**Page 140:** Speckled enamel storage bowl, $9, fishseddy.com. Dauville cereal bowl in gold, $22; Tinware cereal bowl in white, $14: canvashome.com. Roscoe nesting bowls five-piece set, $30; Hue bowl in green, blush, and blue, $5 each: crateandbarrel.com. **Page 141:** Forest Critter knobs in fox and owl, $12 each; Gramercy knob, $10; Druzy Quartz knob in pink, $18; Crowned Quartz knob in clear and purple, $28; Swirled geode knobs in gray and pink, $24 each; Mesmeric glass knob in pink, $10; black-and-white–stripe knob, $8; Frosted timber knob in taupe, $10: anthropologie.com. Black porcelain cabinet knob with brass rosette, $9; oversize square crystal cabinet knob with solid brass base, $28; octagonal pale green glass knob with brass base, $11; pink lead-free squared crystal knob with solid brass base, $24: houseofantiquehardware.com. Deco plastic knob, $8, lahardware.com. Stella concrete cabinet knob, $25 for two; Mission Pyramid cabinet knob, $9; Bristol cabinet knob, $19; Harlow cabinet knob, $19: rejuvenation.com. **Page 143:** Dahl and Mindra decorative pillows, $150 each; Kurna Euro pillow, $170: johnrobshaw.com. Square block pillow in sunflower, $30 (18 inches square); Prana Hexagon pillow by Alegria Home, $140; Leni pillow in sorbet, $74; Macall pillow in brush, $48 (18 inches square); Mod Block pillow in lemon, $30 (18 inches square); Surlia pillow, $89: luluandgeorgia.com. Press Together and Flora pillows by Inaluxe, $44 each; Andanda Kilim pillow by Plum & Bow, $59: urbanoutfitters.com. **Page 147:** Peonies in copper and persimmon by Rifle Paper Co., $190 a roll; Cities Toile in parchment by Rifle Paper Co., $140 a roll; Daydream in blue by Julia Rothman, $165 a roll: hyggeandwest.com. Japanese Floral wallpaper, $350 a roll; Coy in marine, $165 a roll: wallnutwallpaper.com. Ikat Navy by Fat Bird Designs, $60 a roll; Carrera Marble Herringbone by Sparrowsong, $60 a roll; Tri and Crosses wallpaper in black by Andrea Lauren, $60 a roll: spoonflower.com.

### The 8 Commandments of Foolproof Style

**Page 132:** Monica Rich Kosann for Blue Nile gold-and-sapphire locket, $1,795, bluenile.com. Julie Vos ring of gold plate and mother-of-pearl, $165, julievos.com. **Page 133:** Three Jane quartz-and-crystal earrings, $30, threejaneny.com. Zara faux-leather embossed handbag, $80, zara.com. **Page 134:** Sportmax wool peplum dress, $650, 212-674-1817. **Page 135:** Isharya earrings of quartz and gold plate, $188, isharya.com. Mindy Mae's Market black glitter bangle, $20, mindymaesmarket.com. Holst + Lee rope-and-brass bracelet, $150, holstandlee.com. Diane von Furstenberg gold-tone cuff, $148, dvf.com. **Page 136:** Paul Andrew suede heels, $845, modaoperandi.com. **Page 137:** Gorjana gold-plated ring, $80, gorjana.com. **Page 138:** Paul Andrew suede-and-wool heels, $895, modaoperandi.com. Lena Bernard tassel earrings, $40, lenabernard.com. Express gold-tone cuff, $17, express.com. **Page 139:** Gerard Yosca necklace of gold plate, resin, and semiprecious stones, $340, yosca.com.

### A Month of Dinners

**Page 159** *(bottom right)*: Soie Tresée white dinner plate by L'Objet, $38, l-objet.com. **Page 161** *(bottom left)*: Byzanteum white dinner plate by L'Objet, $42, l-objet.com.

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# A Life in Full

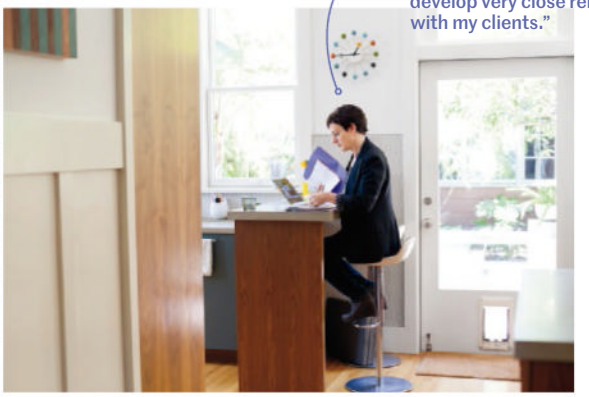
BETWEEN WORKING FROM HOME AND CLOSING ON HOMES, THIS BUSY MOM OF TWO PLACES A HIGH VALUE ON HOW SHE SPENDS EVERY MINUTE OF HER DAY.

**MAXI LILLEY, 47**
- Realtor at Red Oak Realty
- Married to Eric Faurot, with a son, Ryle, 11, and a daughter, Frances, 9
- Oakland

**SOCIAL NETWORK**
"I consider myself a connector. I love hooking clients up with properties and resources."

10:15 A.M. "I'm showing a house to Sarah Drekmeier, who happens to be a client *and* a friend. That happens quite a bit because I live and work in my neighborhood of Rock Ridge."

**PART-TIME THERAPIST**
"Because buying a home can be an intense and stressful time, I develop very close relationships with my clients."



12:45 P.M. "There's more to my job than selling. I also get homes ready to go on the market—coordinating repairs, inspections, and landscaping. Then there's the staging and photo shoot."

3:05 P.M. "Being a Realtor is the most—and least—flexible job. I can run errands in the middle of the day, but if a client decides to write an offer, I drop everything for the next 48 hours."

4:35 P.M. "The most chaotic time of day is between 4:30 and 6 P.M. I've learned how to work in the kitchen with the kids running around and me shouting at them to do their homework."

**EXERCISE YOUR OPTIONS**
"I sneak in a workout whenever I can. If I can't make it to a boot camp or spin class, I'll run the stairs."

6:40 P.M. "Eric is devout about family dinner—he makes sure we sit down together four nights a week. And I'm grateful for it. If it were up to me, I would let it slide whenever life got hectic."

7:30 P.M. "After the race to dinner, Eric and I sometimes unwind in the backyard and watch the kids play basketball. It's nice to recharge before I get back to e-mails and paperwork."

Photographs by Ericka McConnell

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